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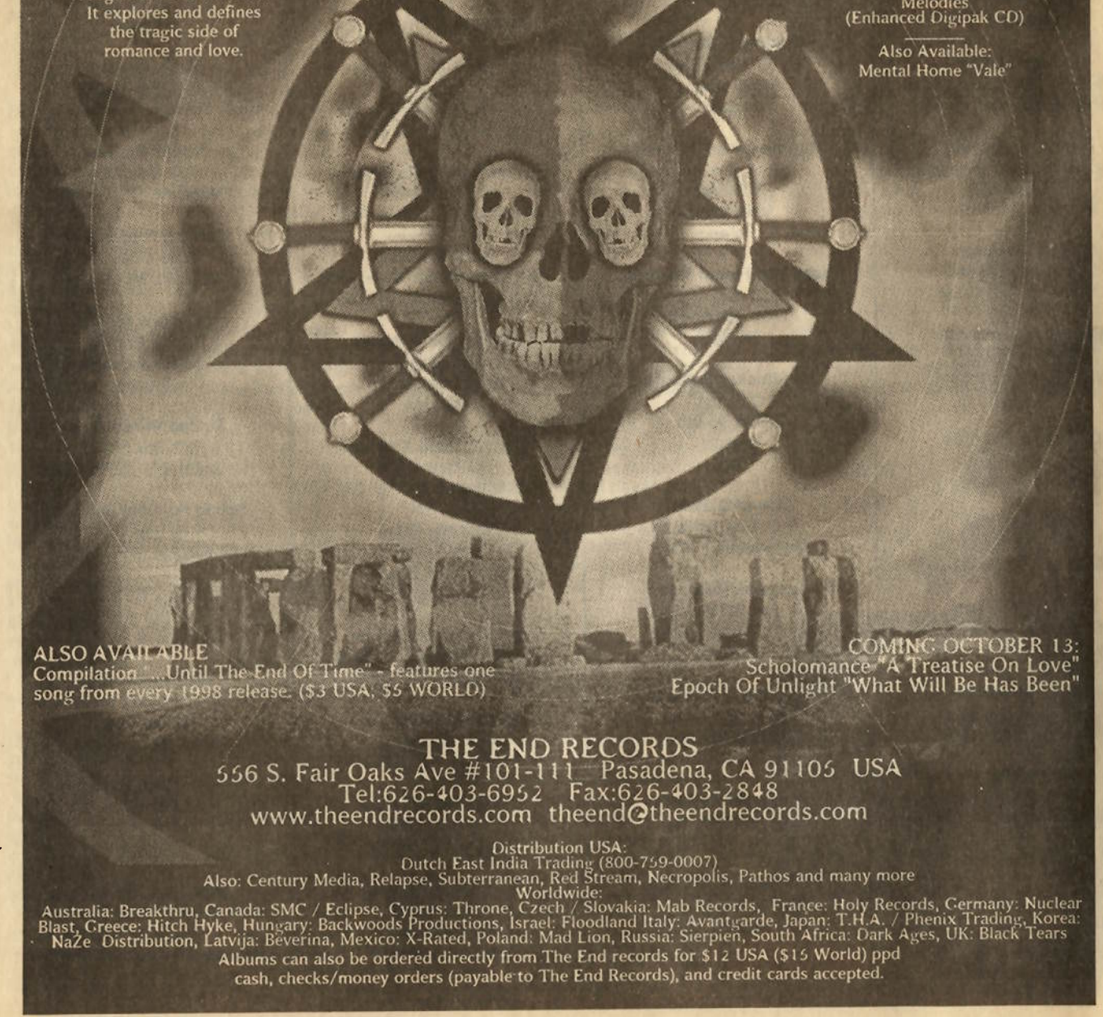

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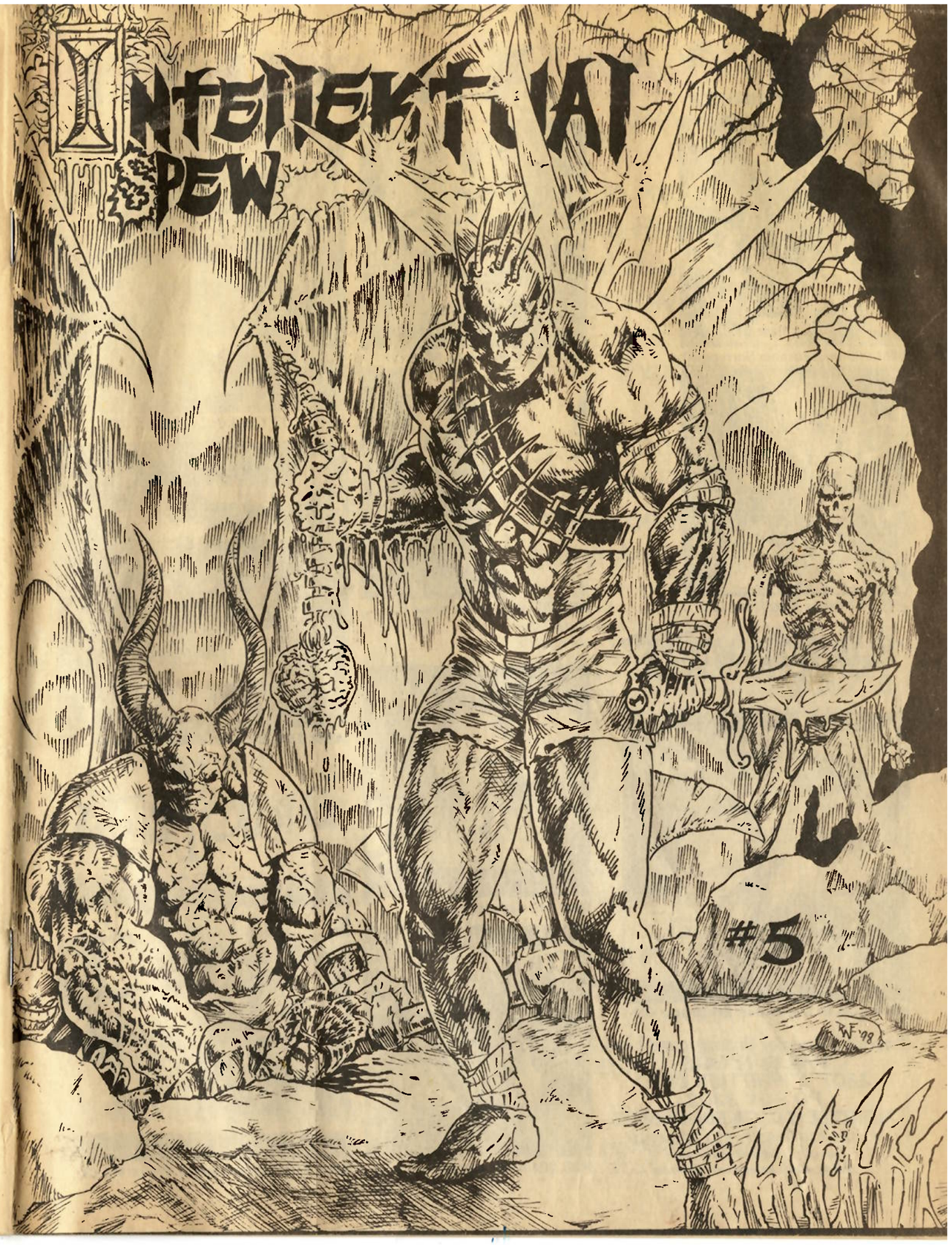

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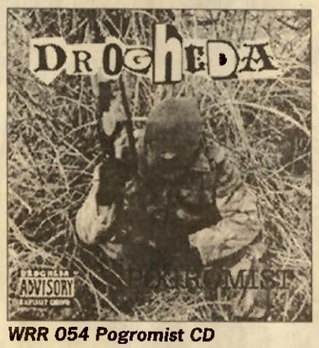

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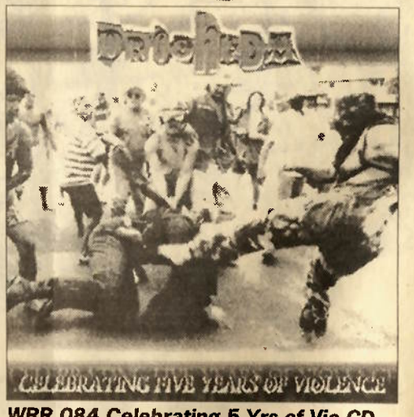

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Intellektual Spew 'zine is released approximately three times a year. We are an extreme music magazine. We do feature other bands outside the metal spectrum although you cannot always tell it. Bands/projects that play metal, punk, hardcore, gabber techno and experimental noise are encouraged to send in material for review and possible interview. All material received will be given a fair, but honest review by one of the writers. We reserve the right to refuse any material that does not fit the theme and/or ideals of this magazine. #5 of Intellektual Spew 'zine saw 5,000 copies printed up by Small Publisher's Co-oP. All material in Intellektual Spew 'zine is property of the writers.

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Hello again everyone. This new issue hasn't been easy. A tornado almost wiped out Jeff, an electrical storm zapped my computer and a dead truck battery seven hours from home couldn't even stop us from cranking out issue number five! Well, after talking with a few people I decided to go for the biggie this issue. We are now giving this magazine away for free, and this issue saw 5,000 copies in print. Thanks to the labels who support me, I'm able to now do this. This makes it easier for me to get this zine out to everyone. I had to find a better way to finance the zine soon, or I would have been no longer able to do the zine because of financial problems. I really hope that you enjoy this zine, and that you let Jeff and I know what you thought of it both good and bad. There are always things to improve on while doing a magazine. I'm still not happy with a few aspects of the magazine, but I'm not sure I'll ever be totally happy. I know that the essay submitted this issue should get some interesting responses. Bill took the time to sit down and express his frustrations with the scene on paper. If you have something to say then let me hear it. I'm always looking for quality essays. I'm going to wrap this up with yet another plea for people to let me know what they thought of the zine. It's the only way we get better. Take care everyone. Cya next issue...

Bart

Greetings once again... Well here we are with number five, finally! Damn it has been rough, if it's not one thing it's another. But oh well, what can you do, you know? I guess that's how life goes, you just have to take it in stride. I didn't intend to get off on a rant so I'll move right along... First off, as I'm sure Bart has already mentioned, the mag is basically free now, and we've moved up to a considerably larger print run. This should make the 'zine more accessible for most... There would have been an in-depth interview with the might Bethlehem included in this issue, but somewhere along the way it was lost coming back from Jürgen over in Germany to myself. In spite of this, the interview will definitely be in the next issue and should be even better. Look out for it. And as always, there were several other interviews which didn't get answered, but it's their loss not mine. If you don't want to promote your band that's your problem... Umm, I can't think of much else to mention (but I know as soon as this is gone off to print, I'll remember a thousand things) so I guess I'll wrap it up for this time. Before doing so, I'd like to once again encourage everyone to get in touch and spread the word. Keep the underground alive and stay true to whatever it is that you do... Take care and goddamnit take out the time to send in an essay about anything that's on your mind. You'd be surprised. Until next time...

Jeff

Bart thanks the following people...
Labels: Relapse Records, Century Media, Nuclear Blast, Repulse Records, Red Stream, Seasons of Mist, Hammerheart Records, Esophagus Records, Necropolis, Morbid Records, Victory, Nitro, Epitaph, Misanthropy, Metal Blade, Mortal Coil, Extreme Scene, No Fashion, Fierce/Mayhem, Listenable, Twilight Records, Meat Hook Productions, The End Records, Osmose, Pulverised, Pavement, Dr. Dream Records, Goldtrack Records, Be a Freak Records, ETY Records, Wild Rags, Dwell, and Dark Horizon Records. Bands: Special thanks to these bands for doing the interview, ...And Oceans, Arch Enemy, Assück, Avulsed, Boobie Hatch, Damaged, Deaden, Incantation, Martyr, Mental Home, Morticite, Odes of Ecstasy, Pessimist, Rotten Sound, Scepter and Sculptured, also thanks to Denial of Grace, Embodiment, Social Animosity, Fleshtized, Spinecast, Agathocles, Angelcorpse, Jaww, Aurora Borealis, Götterdämmerung, Entropy, Disarray, Skinned, Lividity, Insatanity, Fleshgrind, Mortal Decay, CorpseVomit, Embalm, Disfigured, Regurgitation and many more. Zines: Brutalized, Metal Nightmare, Metal Mafia, Drenched in Blood, Insomnia, Worm Gear, Corrosion, Unrestrained, The Hurt, Metal-Core, Metal Curse, Arrows of Malice, Meathooked, Torture Chamber, Headfucker, Grimoire of Exalted Deeds, Midwest Metal, Pernicious, Satan's Candy Basket, Sloth and many more. Special thanks to Russell Evans for the great artwork!!. There are tons I'm sure I've forgotten. All the people who buy the zine and let me know what you thought of both good and bad, extra special thanks to Susan and my family for putting up with all my craziness. Your help is appreciated more than I think you'll ever know...Thank you.

Thank you and best regards goes out to the following from Jeff... Those who took the time and effort to promote their talents and complete our interviews. First and foremost Michael Amott for making my first phone interview a great one and also Matt Bower of Century Media for repeatedly setting it up, Dave Rotten and Avulsed, as well as Odes of Ecstasy and Martyr... A big fuckin' thanks goes out to Tino and Epoch of Unlight for letting us crash at his house and making our stay a great one (and by the way, the show was killer!) and to Kelly and Exhume Distribution as well as the other cool people we met in Memphis... Jeff and Denial of Grace, Grim and Embodiment, Jürgen Bartsch and Bethlehem (next time guys, next time!), Patrick of Red Stream, King and Deceased, the Alabama horde: Garth and Fleshtized and Cameron and Spinecast, David la Duke at Ball Buster magazine and Sinbad Productions for everything... All the cool people we met in Champaign, Illinois... Raleigh (you spelled my name wrong) Willson, Chris Coberly, Jeremy and Jackal Blaster 'zine, Allen and Thorns of the Carrion... All those who got in touch and ordered the mag and all who submitted their product for review – be it good or bad we appreciate it! Those in general that help and support the scene as well as anyone who may have proved to be helpful in the making of this magazine and lastly anyone who has been forgotten. Let us know! Cheers!

#6 is underway. Interviews already completed with Bethlehem, Death and Bewitched...

Send in Your Essays

I offer an open forum to all the readers of Intellektual Spew 'zine. If you write up an essay putting your ideas on paper concerning anything that affects your daily life as an extreme music fan, then I'll put it in my next issue. I will not edit it in any way regardless of my views towards the essay. The only time I will cut an essay out is due to space constrictions. Essays that concisely say what you feel always make for the best essays. I encourage all of you to write something for #6. Flex those temporal muscles and send something in!!

Cover Artwork Credits

Special thanks goes to Russell Evans for the incredible artwork that has graced this issue. If you're interested in getting in touch with Russell, his address is as follows:

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Policy Note for #5

I must state that Full Moon Productions did send in material for review for this issue. Full Moon Productions was also slated to have the full-page back cover for an ad of theirs. After countless times of contacting them over the phone or computer, and after countless excuses of why it wasn't there, and the same reassurances that the ad was on the way, it became apparent to me that they had no intention of using/buying the ad space. This caused me to lose some money for the zine as well as wasting a large amount of my time. I find this highly unprofessional. I have pulled all their reviewed material from this issue. Those reviews will appear in #6.

...And Oceans

I was quite impressed with ...And Ocean's release, and after quite a few spins, I went on the web to possibly learn more about the band. I found out they had a web site, and I ended up sending band member "You" of ...And Oceans an interview. They play some great blackened metal, that shows some real originality. Read on to see what "You" had to say... (Bart)

The members of ...And Oceans have been in various bands. All of them have had unusual names for metal bands. Band names like Festerday, Jungle Yuppies and Peacefrog do not summon up images of extremity. ...And Oceans is a vague band name as well. Why the decision to use such unusual band names, and do any of them have actual meaning to the band?

The names weren't so important in the beginning I guess, but after some years we were very attracted to the name Festerday. Even if the name didn't fit our music in the end, it had some sort of a nostalgic feeling. The name Peacefrog meant a lot to me, and it still does.

The members of the band have shifted from death metal to grindcore to black metal. Why the shift of genres over the years?

We didn't shift from one genre to the other, coz most of the bands were projects with different members, but at the same time as Festerday existed I've been fascinated by all sort of metal and noise for over 10 years, and I still am. I have no recollection of the main reason of starting the projects. Festerday was our main band, and we wanted it to stay on the death metal level and with Headache we expressed simple rawness, but not so seriously. It wasn't easy to find competent members in those days, and we couldn't start up this band without members on the same level as we were.

I don't consider us being trend followers, coz we have always had exceptional elements in our music, and actually we don't give damn about what others do, think or say! We were involved in the underground when the nowadays "blackers" were still shitting in their pants.

Have you had any questions as to why just now you are starting the black metal band? Have you had any saying you are following the trend, and if so how do you react to them?

I'm not sure, but I have to say one thing once and for all. We are not black metal! I do understand if people categorizes us as that, but we haven't got any satanic lyrics and that is one of the reasons we dropped the corpsepaint. We are an anti-Christian band. That is important in our daily life, but that is not the primary issue in ...And Oceans. Only the O is vital for us!

I noticed that you use more than one language when it comes to your lyrics. This was even true with your earlier projects. How many different languages do you use and what are they? Are there any particular reasons you write in multiple languages?

Actually, we used four languages in the final stage of Festerday, but some other languages were involved earlier too. We had something in Latin, but later we used Finnish, Swedish, English and German. On the debut album, German was replaced by the tiny title of the track in French. There is no particular reason why I write the lyrics in multiple languages, but some things are just easier to express in different languages. It brings deepness into the lyrics and facilitates the floating of thoughts. It all depends on which sphere I find myself in. English, Swedish and Finnish are part of my daily life, and that has probably affected the writing of the lyrics.

You have signed to a promising label that is releasing some very original acts these days. Why did you decide to go with Seasons of Mist Records? Had you heard much of them before you signed with them? Do you feel any pressure to "compete" with the other bands on the label? What are your thoughts on Seasons of Mist so far in dealing with them?

Yes, S.o.M. has pretty unique bands. I think it was because they offered us the most decent deal, and they were also the first label to show vital interest. I had heard about S.o.M. bands, but I didn't know anything about the people behind the label and about their capacity. No, we don't feel any pressure being on S.o.M., coz we don't compete with the other bands, but if you are referring to sale figures, we don't have to worry about that. I think S.o.M. is a brilliant label, and they have potential to do almost anything. They have supported us 110%, and I think they will outstrip many bigger labels in the future.

> *"...soundscapes of the neo-cultural hypnotic life with colors of the nightmare's beauty."*

How would you go about describing the music of ...And Oceans? What kind of feelings do you think the music should evoke on the listener? In what ways do you see ...And Oceans developing in the future?

Our music could be defined as soundscapes of the neo-cultural hypnotic life with colors of the nightmare's beauty. We have heard a lot of different views about our music, but the essential thing is how we feel about our material. To some it appears as aggressive, melancholic moods, but I think that as long as it evokes any feelings on the listener it's great.

It's hard to say which dimension ...And Oceans will be sucked into in the future, coz it depends on the moods and thoughts that will flow before they collide in our minds. The long journey hasn't started yet!

I saw that your album, The Dynamic Gallery of Thoughts, will be released on vinyl in limited edition of 500 copies. Who will release that, and when will it be available? Will the vinyl version contain anything different from the CD version that has been released? Also, Polish Mystic Productions has put your album out on cassette. Is it available yet, and does it contain anything different as well?

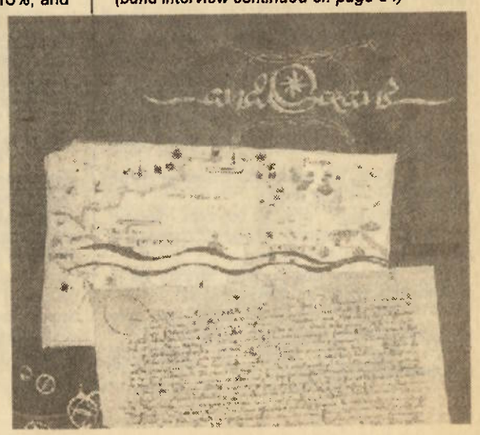
I think it's Merciless records who will release it on vinyl, and I guess it should be out somewhere between July and September. The vinyl will be a picture LP limited to 500 copies, and there should be a poster also (I'm not sure about this poster??). For those who want it ACT FAST! The cassette format is nice, but it doesn't contain as many pictures as the CD booklet, but it's still brilliant.

I saw that you are going to release the War - Finland vs. Norway!...And Oceans vs. Bloodthorn later this year. When will it be out? I assume it's going to be out on Seasons of Mist since both bands are from that label? Have you finished recording that material yet, and if so, how did it come out sounding?

S.o.M. will release it in the autumn. We came from the studio a couple of weeks ago, and the final result turned out fuckin' awesome. This new material is better than ever, faster and more raw, and it still kicks ass!

How often does ...And Oceans get to play live? From the pictures on your web site, I would think that the band would be quite effective visually live. Describe your perfect idea for a show, and how close has ...And Oceans came to that ideal show?

We haven't played live for almost a year now, but we'll start doing some gigs here in Finland within a couple of weeks. We had some gigs earlier, but it was about two years ago, so no one hardly remembers them. The main point is to play a good gig as tight as possible and to not be too drunk. We don't wanna disappoint the audience. Something original and new will be added on gigs too, but *(band interview continued on page 34)*



Arch Enemy

Remember the brilliance released on the '93 album Heartwork by Carcass? Or the profoundly brutal Dark Recollections by Carnage in 1990? Yes? Well, there's a theme here in that guitarist extrodinaire Michael Amott has graced each album with his talents, and now he has a new monstrous entity that goes by the name of Arch Enemy. Arch Enemy is as impressive as they come in the extreme metal field, combining sharp melodies with ferocious brutality and an ability to craft songs like no one else to achieve a result that is nothing short of utter brilliance! 1996 saw the band release its debut full-length Black Earth on an obscure European label, and 1998 brings with it a contract from the Century Media empire and a new full-length entitled Stigmata, which shows the band progressing in all areas to release a truly stunning body of work destined to be one of the finest the year has to offer. Amidst his busy promotional schedule, the very laid back Mike Amott along with his lively daughter close at hand took out a bit of his time to speak with me about his band, past bands and much in between. If you all enjoy this interview half as much as I've enjoyed the latest Arch Enemy release then I'm sure everyone will be quite happy. This is one metal release you need not delay in getting...bottom line! Now read on... (Jeff)

Before we get to Arch Enemy, I'd like to talk about Carcass and Carnage for a moment.

What's the fuck? (pause then laughing) Just kidding...

Why exactly did you leave Carcass?

It wasn't for musical reasons, but it was for personal reasons because of stuff that was going down at that time. That's it basically. I'm very proud to been a part of that band. I think they'll be remembered as one of the innovators in the genre of extreme metal. I was very proud to have written music for the two albums that I participated on. I have a lot of cool memories recording and touring with that band.

How long were you with them?

For about three years. I recorded two albums with them. One was called Necroticism... and the second was Heartwork.

Are you still in contact with them?

Yeah, very much so. I speak to them now and again so it's cool, and we have a good relationship.

Okay, so when did Carnage come together for the first time?

Carnage...wow, let me think. Around '87 I think. The original vocalist of Carnage is now the singer of Arch Enemy.

So was this formed strictly as a side band or was it a full time band?

Oh no, it was a full time band. We were really serious back then. (laughs)

Can you recall all what you released with Carnage?

We didn't do that much. First we started releasing our rehearsal tapes in the underground then we did two demos. Then there was a seven inch that had live material on it that we recorded in Mexico. Then we released one album for Earache Records that came out on Relativity, and that was it basically. Then I went on to do Carcass.

Has there ever been any talk of reforming Carnage?

Not really. Part of the reason is because I'm already in another band with the original singer of Carnage here in Arch Enemy. I don't see the point of reforming. It's like going to bed with your ex-wife. There would be mixed feelings.

Okay, now tell us how the members came together to form Arch Enemy.

Okay, basically in late '95, I had a lot of riffs and ideas for songs, and I called up some people. We rehearsed like only four times since we lived quite far apart, then we went into the studio. We recorded our first album which was called Black Earth.

> *"I do want to keep it heavy and brutal, but I want something catchy."*

Actually my next question was whether the band released any demos or anything before Black Earth...

No. I think the scene has changed a lot from the '80s from when they used to do a lot of demos. Nowadays they seem to go in and record straight away. Some may record a promotional demo, and now it seems like everyone gets a deal these days. (laughing) Unfortunately, because most bands are shitty, or so I think anyway. Arch Enemy's goal is to put out high quality metal, and I think we are very capable of doing that. We've been at it for a while, but I think it still sounds fresh. There are a lot of ideas going around.

Well that definitely comes through on the music...

Well, that's cool.

Is Black Earth still available?

Not really no, because it was done on a small label in Europe, but it is still available in Japan with like bonus tracks on it. It was always be available there because we have a really good label in Japan.

The release never really made it over here to the states very well...

No, the label that put it out in Europe really didn't sort anything out for the states. They were pretty lame. Now that we're with Century Media, it's pretty cool to get an album out over there as well. Now we're doing some American promotion and that's pretty cool. I think you need Arch Enemy over there. (laughing) I think you need something to counter the Oz Fest music you have going on over there. Coal Chamber...now there's something to be proud of. (laughing)

Yeah really, so how did Arch Enemy attract the attention of Century Media after Black Earth?

Well, you know that I basically recorded the Stigmata album myself, and I just shopped the tape around to Metal Blade and others. I sent it to like five labels. Metal Blade, Nuclear Blast, Earache, Century Media, etc... these independent metal labels. Everybody was totally interested, so it was a good situation to be in. Century Media came through with the best offer, and here we are. I'm pretty satisfied with the work that they've done so far. They seem to be putting a fair amount of work into it, hooking me up with a lot of interviews, and they seem to be doing okay.

Do you write most of the music for Arch Enemy?

Yeah I do. I am the main song writer, lyrics as well. I also arrange a lot of the music, and I co-produce the albums as well.

How long does it generally take for you to write your music?

Well it comes in bursts. I write almost a whole album in a week or something. I record riffs here and there. I have a drum machine, which is pretty primitive, but it works. I do a little recording now and again at home when I got enough ideas. Basically, I try to write really good songs, you know that might sound stupid, but in the past I used to just stick like ten riffs together with all kinds of time changes and other weird stuff going on. But now I try to have a good chorus and some exciting lead breaks. I try to have some excitement in the music, and also have it pretty catchy. I do want to keep it heavy and brutal, but I want something catchy. Hopefully that comes through on the music. I think it's really important to write good songs. I don't care if it's punk, grindcore, heavy metal or industrial whatever. When you hear a good song, you know it. It doesn't really matter what style of music it is. I don't see why that should be different for this style of music. That's what we try to do. If we succeed is up to audience really. We're into it, and hope that the fans are as well.

The new material seems to be more aggressive. Is this something you were aiming for or was it a natural thing?

I don't know really. I don't know this is, but I'm really kind of schizophrenic. I know that if I write a slow song or mid tempo song, then you know the next one will be a fast song. Or if I've just written a fast song, then the next one will be a slow one. Everything seems to be a reaction against what I've just done. So usually it turns out to be a healthy mix of music. Just trying to keep that good mixture.

The production and everything has improved with the addition of keyboards, instrumentals and such. How did you go about recording the new album in regards to the last?

I went into the studio with the ambition of keeping the brutality and heaviness we had on the Black Earth album. We tried to get it a bit clearer. Have a bit more clarity in the guitar tones, because I wanted everyone to hear what was going on in the riff department. That does seem to be better now. It came out pretty clean yet still pretty heavy. I'm happy with it. It's pretty difficult to record this kind of

music to get a good balance between all the instruments. All of the instruments such as the drums, guitars and such might be playing on this same frequency and fighting for this space on the recording, so that's why it's so difficult to record this type of music. That's also why a lot of metal albums sound like shit as well.

Definitely after listening to Black Earth then going to Stigmata, you can tell there is an improvement.

That's cool. We're just improving and trying to get better. You always have to try to improve yourself in everyday life as well as in music. Like with you doing your magazine, you want the next issue to be a little bit better than the last one. You want to impress people, and you want to impress yourself. I really hate bands that say, "We only play for ourselves, and we don't care what others think." That kind of attitude really annoys me, because I think the fans make this type of music. I used to get angry at that type of stuff as a fan, and I still am a fan myself. I went out a couple weeks ago and bought the new Slayer album.

What did you think of that?

I don't know. Mixed feelings.

I've only heard a few tracks from it...

It's not their best stuff. Basically, I was in line the days they were releasing Reign in Blood and Hell Awaits, so I go back a while with them. They seem to have left the pure metal style of writing. They used to have the most evil, sickest riffs around, and they don't have that anymore.

> *"It's progressive metal. It's heavy metal. It's a little bit of everything."*

Can't say that I'm happy with the new stuff...

Some of the stuff sounded like Biohazard or something like that.

I don't know if you've heard the band Korn, but they sounded like that on a few songs.

Yeah well, I don't want to talk about that. (laughing)

Do you find that playing alongside your brother makes writing any more easy or difficult?

We get along great, and he's a great guitar player and that's why he's in Arch Enemy. Not because he's my brother. We get along real good, and actually he's contributing a lot of cool riffs for the next album, the third album. We have like four or five new songs completed, and they are really good. It seems like the song writing process will be more equally divided between he and I. Can you hold on?

Sure...

(he's gone for a bit then comes back) Sorry my daughter is here, and I'm having to take care of her. It's a very metal oriented day as you can see. (laughs)

I know that the other members of the band are involved in other bands. Could you tell me a bit about that?

The drummer does a band called Euchrist, and they've put out two CD's. It's really fast death metal type stuff. The new album was a little bit slower, but it's still pretty intense material. I think he's just quit that band now though. My brother did a project for a while, and I'm in a project called Spiritual Beggars. It's more a '70s hard rock style band, which is totally different from Arch Enemy. Basically, those are the other projects that are going on.

So is Arch Enemy everyone's main priority?

Well, hopefully. (laughing) I certainly try to put 100% into this band, but I put that into everything I do. I can't just put a little into it. It has to be 100%.

Sounds like you have a heavy schedule...

Yes, because both bands have a lot going on, and both are semi-successful. I just have a lot of stuff to do. I do all the promotion for both bands, and there is a lot of playing live, recording and such.

Yes I know because this interview had been scheduled three times before, and you would end up being on tour or what not.

Yes, they would send me like promotional schedules saying I have these interviews on Tuesday, and I would be gone on tour that day. So it's pretty difficult. Communication problems between myself and the Century Media office are the cause of some of it I guess.

There seems to be a progressive edge to your music as well as the melody seems to take a big roll in the music. Would you say that true, and what's the most important part to you when writing?

Can you hold on one second?

Sure...

(He's gone again for a while, and you can hear his daughter in the background the whole while.) Okay sorry, I'm back again. I just try to write music that's enjoyable to myself and hopefully that the fans will enjoy. (His daughter is being loud chattering away, and he laughs.) Seems like my daughter has something to say as well about this. (laughing) I just try to write good stuff. The melody is a big part of this band. I think there is a nice balance between the melody and the brutality. That's the fun thing trying to get a good mix. You said that we're a bit progressive, and I agree with the new album, and maybe on the next album we'll get a bit more basic on the next album. I don't know though.

I love it though...

You like the progressive touch though huh?

Yeah.

Ah, we'll keep it then. (laughing) Anything to keep people happy. I don't want to get too progressive. A lot of the real progressive hard rock sounds really stupid to me. It's like crawling up its own ass. As long as you can keep it heavy and brutal, why not throw in some weird and progressive touches as well?

So how would you describe the style of Arch Enemy? Seems rather difficult to put a label on Arch Enemy as death metal or thrash or what not.

Yeah, and that's always the case when I write music because people have a hard time labeling it. Because it's so much easier when you can label it, because then you can sell it. It's just a mixture of all that you just mentioned. It's progressive metal. It's heavy metal. It's a little bit of everything.

Since we've been talking about your previous bands. What's the first band you ever played in?

(laughing because his daughter is getting so loud with her chatterings that it is comical) Can you just hold a second more?

Yeah...

Okay, I'm ready again. Yeah, my first band was Carnage.

Is there one band so far that you've enjoyed more than the others?

I'm enjoying doing Arch Enemy a lot. It's a lot of fun, because I have a lot of freedom. (laughing at his daughter being loud again) Hold on please one more time.

Okay.

(He's gone for just a bit then he's back.) Sorry about that.

That's fine. What type of music do you listen to in your spare time?

I listen to a wide variety of styles and bands.

You've already mentioned the new Slayer.

Yeah, I grew up on that stuff, and I was heavily into buying records years ago. The aggressive music was a big thing for me. Stuff like the first Anthrax album, early Exodus, Slayer, and then there's the German metal such as Destruction and Kreator. That's such a huge part of my musical history. Then when death metal came into my life that was a big deal too. A lot of the death metal was from America such as Repulsion.

What are some of the latest releases you've bought that you really like?

I listen to a lot of really mellow stuff as well, but when it comes to writing, it comes out really heavy. I don't listen to other really heavy bands. I am given a lot of CD's of

(interview continued on page 34)

Assück

I sometimes wonder why some bands are overlooked by the metal community. If Assück had associated itself more with the grind/noise bands like Anal Cunt and company, you would see these guys getting all kinds of coverage. I'm hoping to start that trend, because these guys crank out a great wall of noisy grind live, and after seeing them I had to interview the drummer Rob to learn more about the band. After he warmed up, he was quite a cool fellow. I found out after the interview that he was even part of the old metal band, Nasty Savage. So he's no spring chicken. Read the interview, buy their stuff, and support this great band... (Bart)

told someone not long ago that I going to see Assück live soon, and their first reaction was... "That band is still around?" So how long have you guys been around?

Since about '87.

Has it always been the same guys or what?

It has always been Steve Heritage (guitar/vocals) and I in the band. We had a couple singers, a couple bass players...no three bass players.

> *"Of the many things worthy of dying there are none worthy of killing."*
> *From "Lithographs" from the album* Misery Index

Have you guys always been putting material out or does it come out in spurts or what?

It took us four years to do our last record. Anti-Capital came out in '90 or '91, and this record came out in '96 or around there somewhere. I'm not sure on the dates. We do them as soon as they are ready.

Is the delay because of lack of money?

No, we don't even pay for them. It's not that. It's just hard to write that many songs. It's hard to not make the songs exactly the same. We just spend a lot of work and time on them. We tour also, and you can't really write songs while on tour. I go to school full time as well, so it's either touring or going to school that slows it down.

So do you guys mainly tour during the summer when you're off from school?

Usually yeah...

What are you going to school for?

Materials science engineering with a specialization in metals. I just transferred to the University of Florida.

I saw tonight's crowd had a nice mix of both punks and metal heads. Is it always this way?

Umm...we always get the punks, but we don't always get the metal heads. Which...I think that a lot of the metal heads like us, because a guy last night came up and told us that we were death metal. (snickers) I guess that's since we're from Tampa. You know, I wish everyone would come out. I don't think just because they think they won't like it or won't fit in that it shouldn't prevent them from coming to the show. You can dress however you want. I don't care.

Do you like both metal and punk?

Oh yeah, I've always liked metal, and I've always liked hardcore. I started listening to hardcore before anything else.

How has the band's sound changed since back in '87?

We can just play a lot better now.

Has it always been just as fast or what?

Oh yeah, that was the original idea to play as fast as we could.

What does the band name Assück mean anyway?

It doesn't mean anything.

I've never looked at your lyrics, but what are you trying to say with them?

Our last record, Anti-Capital, was made up of a lot of political lyrics, but I think the newer record is less political. Steve writes the lyrics, but they are more written for things that we're dealing with personally.

How often do you bust a head on your drums? You were beating the fuck out of them tonight.

(laughing) That was the third show on those heads. I try to change them before they do break.

I'd also be a pain to have to try to change them during the set as well...

Besides that, and we can't afford it. I bought that previous set thinking they'd last the entire tour of 41 days. We are playing 41 days and doing 41 shows. The ones I got were on sale, and I guess you get what you pay for.

When you guys go on tour, is it you guys paying for it or does the label help any?

Nope the label doesn't help us any there. They just sell records.

Because, I noticed when you sell your shirts and CD's that they are way cheaper than many bands.

Well, we make the shirts. Actually, Dan from Reversal of Man makes them for us. He does all the shirts for us. I mean the shirts cost three or four dollars a piece, then it costs a $1.50 to get them printed so how expensive should they be? It's not like we have to make ten dollars on every shirt.

But I see unfortunately with a lot of metal bands that they are changing at least $10 to $15 for a shirt.

My experience with metal bands is that for some reason, they are a lot more concerned with money than I think they should be. I didn't start a band or play this music because I just wanted to make money. I'm going to school so I can make money in the future.

Still most are complaining that they are not making anything, but somebody, somewhere has got to be putting in a nice profit with those prices.

Yeah, I know. I mean, I would never pay $15 for anything related to the band. I wouldn't pay that for a record, CD, shirt, whatever. I wouldn't pay that much to go see a band either. So they lost me as a customer already. It's ridiculous, I mean we make a dollar or so on the shirts and that's fine. It's enough to do what we're doing.

So you're making enough to pay for gas and all that?

Oh yeah...

Are you able to stay at a place every night?

Well, with a night like tonight we're going to drive all night I believe. It's a long drive. This isn't my job, I mean that if I don't like it, I can just leave it. I'm not trying to make a business out of it. It's hard enough to keep the band going, having to buy tires and shit like that.

So you're from Tampa...

Yeah, we are but I'm originally from St. Petersburg.

Do you play live down there a lot?

We play down there a few times a year. Don't wanna play down there too much.

That'll be good there man. Thanks for doing it.

Hey, no problem, and thanks for the interest.

Assuck
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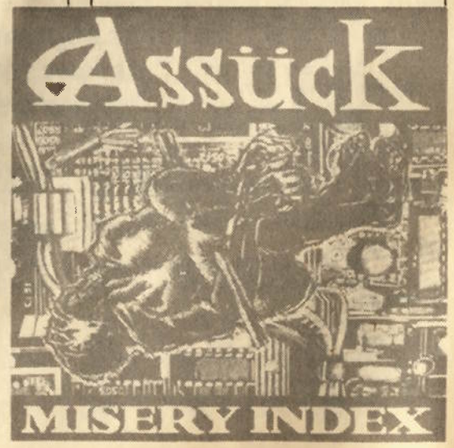

Avulsed

As with anything, bands come and go, but the best of the best will remain, undaunted by passing fads and the current hype. And such is the case with Avulsed, one of Spain's premiere death metal acts up and running since early '92. On the heels of their latest and most surprising release, front man and Repulse label owner Mr. Dave Rotten took some time to answer my questions about their stunning new release Cybergore among other things. Cybergore, an album that took me (and I'm sure many others) by surprise, which takes their unique style of brutality and meshes it with a completely opposite end of the spectrum...techno. Yes, techno! The thought may be misleading, but with one listen the odd uniqueness begins to show through and with subsequent listens you're hooked. Death metal enthusiasts would do good to look into this, for there's much to be found and that's what's encouraged. You've got to admit, it take some balls to try something like this and much in their favor it really worked out. So get going... (Jeff)

So Dave Rotten, how are things for you and your activities lately?

Pretty relaxed I'd say, as we haven't played for two months now. Tomorrow we were supposed to play, but our drummer has a growth infection and we can't go. Then the week after we have another. We'll see. Right now we're basically writing new songs for our second album. We'll basically concentrate ourselves on writing new material during the summer until we record it in December or so.

Before we get to current events I'd like to talk about a few other things first. Christ Denied was your other band awhile back, whatever became of this band? Has it officially broken up or what? When did Christ Denied first form? What all was released by this band, and what do you think about this band looking back on it now?

It's still my other band!! Well, it's just a project, because we never rehearse and we never play live. We have released a 7" EP entitled Thy Horned God on Morbid Records back in early '95 and a full-length CD called ...Got What He Deserved on another German label called Gulli Records. It's actually being re-released by Qabalah Productions, a sub-label of Repulse, with re-painted cover by Joe Petagno and much better layout. We wanted this re-release, because Gulli Records was so small. They couldn't afford any kind of promotion or distribution at all, and they hardly sold 1,000 copies mainly in Germany. Now we have just recorded two new songs for a split EP with a Japanese band called Massground on a Japanese label called Bloodbath Records, and our side will be entitled Impale The Fraud. Our upcoming plans are to record our second album by the end of the year also on Qabalah Productions.

> *"Avulsed is still a 100% true death metal band."*

Now, Repulse Records is your label, you started it up, correct? When did you first start up Repulse, and what prompted you to do so? Why the change the name from Drowned to Repulse Records?

Well, it wasn't just a change of name really. It was a radical change. Even though I was the one who was in touch with the bands, signed them, and ran Drowned Productions, I was just an employee because it was a sub-division of a record store. Initially, I started that label on my own in October '90 releasing demos, but a year later I joined that record store and they did the financial support, so after all I hadn't the biggest decisions. Through '91-93, things went from high to low and by the end of '93, I got really tired of seeing how things were being done at the label. I couldn't do proper promotions (almost no promotional CD's or advertisements), and I couldn't sign as many bands as I wanted, so I decided to create a new label in January '94. Here nobody tells me what to do, and I sign the bands I like... basically death metal.

It seems Repulse Records has become quite successful. What would you say have been the factors that have led up to this point?

Well, I recognize that Repulse Rec. has become quite popular, but only on an underground basis. I think we're actually the most respected death metal label in the world. I think the main factor has been our total trust on death metal. When I started this new label in January '94, almost every label was releasing only black, but instead of that, we kept releasing death and actually almost all these labels are changing back to death. People can see we've been 100% honest to ourselves and to the fans all the time, and they appreciate it!!

Have you had any recent signings of any new bands? What is coming for the Repulse label in the near future?

Yes, we've signed quite a few bands lately. Gothic Sex from Spain, Scattered Remnants from USA, Jesus Martyr from Argentina, Sepsism, from USA, Centinex from Sweden, Totten Korps from Chile, Anasarca from Germany and maybe others. All these bands are releasing albums within this year and also new albums by Golgotha and Adramelech and the new Avulsed and Rotten Sound for early '99. We might release some other surprises as well!!

Now onto current things. First, how did the band come to the decision to do this awesome techno-death album, Cybergore, which is your last album, Eminence in Putrescence completely re-mixed into techno fused with your guttural style of death metal. How did this all come about?

This was an idea we had in mind for a long time. Just after we heard the first remixes of Fear Factory and Brutal Truth. That sounded really cool to us!! But it wasn't until June '97, when a friend of us showed us a few seconds what he had taken from our album. We liked it so much, and then went to the studio and took the guitar and vocal parts from the album and gave it to him. Well, they're were two guys, one is David Nigger, my partner in Christ Denied, and M.C. Velarde, his brother. Both made the re-mixed on his home pc. We just wanted to do something different. You should know that our music isn't that easy to re-mix as Fear Factory's is, so this was like a dare for us. It's like imagine Cannibal Corpse doing techno remixes!! Well, we did it, and I think we succeeded, because the result is really great!!

This would seem like a massive undertaking, to completely rework your last album in this style. How did this process begin? Can you give us an idea of how things went in the studio while this whole project was developing, and what the experience was like? Was this very difficult to pull off?

The whole thing took like 8 months!! It wasn't an studio, but a bedroom, ha, ha!! The two brothers did four songs each. They were doing them and showing them to us every time they made something new. Then we decided if that was good or not or giving them ideas, like do this, or do that. We told them to make all songs with different moods. You can see there's only two "hardcore-techno" songs, others with more vocals, others with less, others more guitars. We didn't want to make a monotonous thing like Fear Factory did, and definitely way more heavy & brutal!! When everything was finished, we brought it to a studio to mix it properly and do the mastering. The first mix wasn't good, so they had to repeat it and then the mastering wasn't that good, so we took it to another studio and spent quite a lot of money only to master it, but it was worth it, because we wanted it to sound really powerful!!

What kind of reactions have you gotten from fans and press, and whatnot regarding the Cybergore album?

We're getting reactions of every kind. Some says it's a total shit, others say it's okay, but they don't like techno. Others say we're like sacrilegious, others totally love it, and others say that thanks to us, they've discovered techno. This is just an experiment and in some way we did it to shock people!! This is something nobody dared before. I mean, to mix such opposite styles such as brutal death and techno, and we proved that music has no boundaries!! If we like it, many others will do as well, but only the open minded ones!! Of course we knew we were going to be slagged off in many mags, but also worshipped in others. Opinions have to be

respected as long as they're coherent you know.

There is also a CD-ROM video clip included on Cybergore which I think was very well done. Tell us about this. When was it filmed and at what location(s) was it done at? This would seem to go hand in hand with the Cybergore theme.

A friend of ours, Nacho, the same guy who's running the Repulse page, did the CD-ROM. He's really talented as far as computer things are concerned. He also loves death metal, so he was the perfect person to make it. The result was awesome, even if he didn't have all the time and programs to make it better, but anyway I think it's one of the most complete CD-ROM's you can see nowadays. Our video clip was filmed back in June '95, quite old, and the sound was taken from our promo of '95. It was also filmed by a friend, he did it for free!!

It's apparent that Avulsed is a band that plays live quite often. It seems you've been involved with several recent tours. Tell us more about your recent live journeys. There was mention of coming to the US, what more can you tell us about this?

Yes, Avulsed is, above all, a live band. We feel our best side is when we play live, because we translate the brutality of our music into a live performance. We don't do anything special on stage, I mean, we don't disguise ourselves like clowns or do any special effects. We don't need that to cover our music. That's for bands whose music isn't good enough, so they have to do something extra. Our music speaks for itself!! When somebody goes to see a death metal band, they want to see something brutal, and we offer that!! Even if our music on CD may not be too brutal compared to other bands, we're definitely far more brutal on stage. We don't need to play blast beats all the time to be brutal. We love to play live as much as we can, but not at any cost. I mean, for example, here in Madrid we don't like to play more than one or maybe two times a year, depends. We have already toured Europe twice, one with Sinister on '96 and other with Incantation in '97. We were supposed to play on the US west coast, Mexico, Chile, Argentina and Uruguay in May '98, but in March, Josh from Infamy died. He was the one who was handling the US dates, so the whole idea had to be cancelled. Anyway, we hope to go and play overseas some day. Then people will have the chance to see a really brutal band live!! You still haven't seen it all if you haven't seen Avulsed live!!

I was curious as to if any of your early material is still available, and if so could you provider us with ordering info?

The vinyl stuff is now completely sold out, but our early demos, even if they sound extremely cheesy compared to our current sound, I think they're a part of our history, so if people want to listen what we were doing in '92/93, why not sell these demos to them?? They're available for $4 and $5 US dollars respectively. Both come with pro-printed colour covers!! We also have some killer merchandise available!!

Now that this has been released, it's time for the band to focus on its second full-length. Your promo sheet says that you plan to record the upcoming full-length in Sweden. What more can you tell us about the plans for your upcoming album? Why the choice to record in Sweden?

Yes, our aim is to record our second album at Sunlight Studios. Not because we want to get that typical sound, in fact we have doubts because of that!! We don't want to sound like another "Sunlight-band". We just want to go outside of Spain and get a killer production. We believe Tomas Skogsberg is one of the best (and cheapest) for our kind of death metal. We might be going to Denmark, who knows. Or perhaps we'll have to record it here again, but in that case we would like to bring Danish Jacob Hansen (ex-Invocator) to produce us, but we'll see!!

I suppose that about wraps up the interview. Thank you for taking the time to complete it. Take this last chance to close out your interview or say whatever you like. If there's anything we missed that you'd like to make light of then please do so. Stay Brutal!

Thanks Jeff for the interview. I want to point that even if we have released this Cybergore CD, Avulsed is still a 100% true death metal band. We'll show it in our next album. This was just an experiment because we also like other kinds of music, and we wanted to make such a thing between one album and another. I hope many people will appreciate it!! It's brutal, it's heavy, it's pounding, it's techno, it's death...!!!

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Brutalized Distribution

I'm always looking for more merchandise to add to my distribution. Bands, labels and 'zines-send samples of your merchandise along with wholesale rates and trade terms. My distro mainly consists of death/grind/thrash metal. Anyone who would like to receive my list of very cheap underground CD's, demos, 'zines and shirts get in touch today. You don't have to send a stamp or a s.a.s.e., however, if you are outside the U.S. please include $1. Also, everything received can also be reviewed in Brutalized Mag. Write today. Long live the fuckin' metal!

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I'm also looking for video traders for horror/gore/cult flicks and bootleg shows on selective bands. I need more gore! Your list gets mine. If interested, write to the address listed above. My movie list consists of underground cult gore flix and mainstream horror. My list of bootleg shows covers all styles of music but is mainly metal. Feel free to write and get my video list or send yours and you'll receive mine as soon as I get yours.

Brutalized #4 still available. 48 page newsprint mag with interviews with: Inhumate, Morpheus Descends, Obituary, Evil Incarnate, Broken Hope, Vicious Circle, Coroner's Report 'zine and Regurgitation, plus over 130 music reviews. $2 (US) $3 (World) to the address listed above in this ad.

Brutalized #6 coming in early fall '98!

Boobyhatch plays Hip Shaking Asscore!!

Boobyhatch is a "local" band for Intellektual Spew 'zine. I have seen these guys play a couple times at local clubs, and they totally go off when they play live. They give both an energetic and aggressive show. They weren't quite as brutal as Assück was that night, but they are getting there. These guys obviously are having a great time making the noise that they do. Check 'em out after learning more about them in this interview I did shortly after their set one night... (Bart)

Alright, for the record...who am I interviewing?

(Dallas) - I'm Dallas, and I play guitar.

(Chris) - I'm Chris, and I play drums.

(Eric in an old man's voice) I'm Donny, and I play bass, and I'm old. (laughing) I'm Eric, and I yell and scream.

Okay, how long has Booby Hatch been around?

A little over a year.

The demo I have was more hardcorish in my opinion, now you guys seem to be almost all blast.

Yeah, more grind.

So what have you released so far?

That demo, Don't Count Your Boobies Before They Hatch, that we recorded at my house. We just released a 7" which is called Hip Shaking Asscore, and it was released on House of Pain. And then we have another one coming out on Denied A Custom.

That's the Japanese label correct?

Yeah.

Where is House of Pain out of?

It's from out of here, and it's Donny, our bass player's label.

How many shows have you guys been playing?

We just got done with a bunch of shows out in California. We don't try to play too much, but not too little I guess. Donny is kinda like he doesn't want to play live as much. He doesn't wanna practice too much. And we're not one of those bands who won't play without a bass player so what can you do?

You just mentioned the California tour. How did that all go?

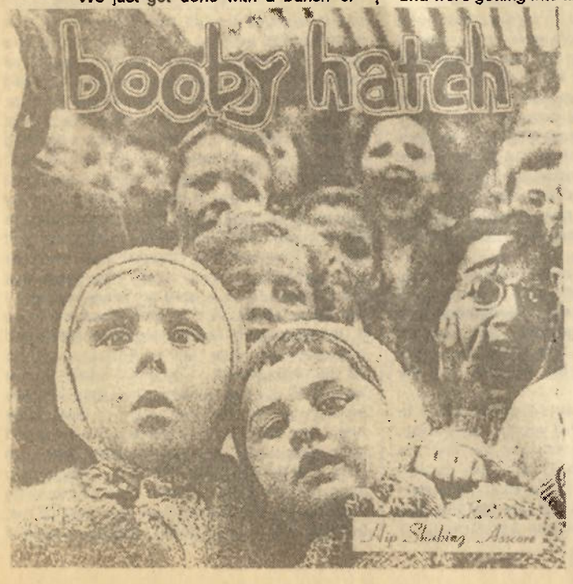
It was fun. I had a lot of fun. In Los Angeles, we played to maybe fifteen people, and they were all throwing stuff at us. They were throwing stuffed animals, food and other stuff. We had to tackle some guy on the stage, and I stuck my ass in his face. (Eric) And afterwards I got harassed by the cops because we were standing on the sidewalk. (Dallas) He was holding a bunch of stuffed animals, and the cop didn't know how to handle it. Someone was having sex on the couch in the club. And here we are...a bunch of Tennessee boys aren't used to seeing stuff like that. (laughter) It was an interesting show. We got paid five bucks for the show.

Do you guys play with anybody else?

Yeah, we played with the Fixtures. They are a great band, and they have had great draws, but not that night. They had a show at the same place before, and over a hundred people were there.

What's it like playing in places that don't even know you?

We're practically used to it though. (Dallas) Our best show was like at this place called Al's Bar in front of maybe ten people, and we were totally on that night. (Eric) I think our best show was in San Francisco, where we played with Ringworm and some other band name I can't pronounce. The good thing about that show was that there were a lot of people there, and they were all having fun and were getting into it.



(Talking to Eric) I heard that Mr. Fancy (side band who act like nerds playing punk) is pretty much on the rocks.

I don't know what is going on with that.

I saw you guys only once, and that was when you lasted like three songs...

Oh yeah, at the place where we got kicked out (small coffee shop in Cookeville called The Magic Bean who was not ready for anything punk). We played like three songs, and then the manager like cut the power and kicked us out.

It was probably because one guy was jumping up and down on the tables (laughing)...

Yeah, that'll do it. Cookeville was not ready for Mr. Fancy. (laughter)

So after the 7", have you guys started to record anymore?

(Dallas) I just got some recording equipment, and we're going to record again here in the next couple weeks at my house. We're also going to do a compilation with High Strung, Plaster and this band from Alabama called One Too Many who used to be called Discontent. We're going to get that on a CD. We're going to record all of it or almost all of it at my place. (Chris) Is that right? We going to get better sound this time? (laughter) (Dallas) We'll see, we'll see. I mean it's not that great of equipment, but that way we have all the time we want. We don't have this studio clock hanging over us ticking away.

(Someone comes up, and tells Booby Hatch they played a good set, and we talked about the set for a few...) Your vocals were always low it seemed tonight regardless of which mic you used.

Probably a combination of me being a weenie, and them not having them up loud enough.

Why do you always sing to your dick? You always hold it at your crotch then you bend over and scream into it.

Trying to make up for what I don't have. (laughter) (Chris) He's trying to get it to respond to something.

Not much else to ask really...

We don't really have that much planned for in the future. We are pretty much playing it by ear. Japan next summer would be cool. (Dallas) Yeah, I was actually going to write that guy, and see if we could set some shows up. (Eric) Donny is talking like he doesn't want to do much for a while, but then I mention a possible tour in Japan, and he's all for it. So who knows. (Dallas) But I'm going to get a hold of that guy and see if it's possible that we could go over there and break even considering the air fair and all that. The guy who does the label has a band, and he could help set up the shows and all that. I know that His Hero Is Gone went over there and did okay, but then again they have great distribution over there as well.

I've been to Japan man, and it's expensive as fuck. Well, anything you want to say to wrap this interview up?

That's it man, thanks a bunch.

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I have wanted to do an interview with Phil of Brutalized 'zine for a while now, but finally got around to doing it. This interview turned out to be more of two good friends chatting than an actual interview I feel. Phil does a great zine that truly does support the underground in the way he does best. I'm honored to have Phil's interview in my pages. Read the interview, order his zine, then see why I wanted to feature him in my pages... (Bart)

How long have you been into metal, and what got you into metal first?

Well, basically I've been into metal my entire existence on this big ball of dirt. I'm 25 now, and I've been listening to, depending on who calls what metal, it since I was about six or seven. I pretty much got into Motorhead as my first extreme band, then as most people say, I started to look for the heavier and heaviest, and speedier and speediest. I came through punk and thrash, and then when death metal came out, I am one of the few people that can probably say that they have been listening to death metal since its inception and actually not be lying. That's pretty much what leads me up to today with the grind, thrash, death, black, speed, doom whatever the hell else is out there.

How long have you considered yourself into the underground, before you decided to do your own magazine?

Well, I guess if you want to say the first time I got into the underground, I began to order on a regular basis from some of the more honest and well known distributors and labels, such as I do believe Metal-Core, Red Stream, Grinding Peace and Napalm from Colorado which I don't even think is around anymore. I began to order from them on a regular basis because I'd take a chance and buy a demo that was cut out for like a buck or two bucks. I was thinking, like it's only one dollar, and I would like the demo and with it I would get ads for other zines and bands. I began writing for zines, and as you've probably heard many times before, it just snowballed and after about maybe a year of doing that, I began to take a serious look at the pile of zines I had. I didn't really think that it was bad, but I felt that for example, they would review something that I already had, and I would read their review and wonder if they were listening to the same thing I was listening to. I was just starting to think I could do just as good if not better job, and then hence Brutalized came into reality. But to answer your original question, I would say probably around '93 is when I would consider myself to be really involved in the underground.

"I'm the type of person where I don't like to start something and do it for just a short while then quit."

Okay, why the name Brutalized for the zine?

You know Bart, this is the number one question I get from anybody, and believe it or not, most people think there is a long intellectual, heh get it, story to it. But to be honest with ya, I feel the name simply represents my attitude towards my type of music, although I do support all kinds of extreme music. Brutal death metal and brutal grind has always been my forte of personal taste. Also, part of the reason why I wanted to start Brutalized, getting back to the last question, was because I felt a lot of brutal death/grind bands weren't getting the support and exposure that they needed. So of course if you love brutal death metal or you love brutal grind, and your friends call you a "brutal" person then it pretty much was the obvious choice. Asked around to a couple people, and they didn't know of any other band, magazine, distro called Brutalized so that was pretty much it. There was no real big history behind it, actually I came up with the idea to do a magazine, and I only picked the name of it two days before my first issue came out.

(Laughing) So not a whole lot of thought went into it...

Umm, not really, I know I didn't want the usual "metal" this or "metal" that, or one with "heavy" or "steel" in the title as well. I didn't want any of the cliché, cheesy words, terms or phrases usually associated with heavy metal.

I know you are married, and that you even have a child. Has that affected your taste in music any?

I'm not sure I know what you mean...

Okay, has it softened up your listening tastes any from before?

Oh no, now I understand what you mean, actually if anything when I was first getting into the underground, thrash was still my forte, but now pretty much anyone who knows me or my magazine knows that the more brutal, sicker, offensive it is, the better. I don't really have a problem with it because I have a family or one by one a child and a wife. It's two separate things. I don't make them listen to what I listen to. Of course my daughter hates my music. She's five right now. If you want a funny little anecdote, my five-year-old says that my music sounds like a bear. As for my wife, she pretty much gave up all hope on me and pretty much just lets me do what I do. In the early days when I first started it, she was kinda bitchy, but over the years as I've gotten bigger and gotten more recognition, she understands that it's a very large and important part of my life. She supports me now, I would say 85% percent of the time. I can't say 100% because I'd be lying.

You sound quite similar to my situation with my girlfriend. I don't think they always understand our dedication that we have to the underground. She tries to, but she doesn't fully. She sometimes feels that she's coming in second to my magazine.

Right, and I'm sure if you could talk to my wife then she would tell you the same thing. With me, it's something that from day one, I'm the type of person where I don't like to start something and do it for just a short while then quit. So she knew from day one that this was something that was going to be going for a while. And now that I'm getting bigger and more well known...as you know I've now added a glossy cover to my zine, the expenses are piling up, but I don't think you should bitch about something that you chose to do. Whether it be financial, time wise, whatever. She understands. She doesn't always like it, but pretty much it's too fucking bad. She's come to terms with it. The majority of my days and nights off when I'm not working are spent doing something with the zine. She feels neglected, and I know that to a point, but she made the choice to stay with me. That's pretty much how I look at it.

What do you think makes Brutalized different from other magazines?

That's really a hard question to answer without sounding egotistical which I hate to sound like because I'm far away from an ego trip. Depending on who you ask, a lot of people have said that there is nothing special about it. That my zine is just like Intellektual Spew, Mortal Coil, New Breed, Metal Mafia or whatever. I never really set out to do or be "the" zine or "the" underground connection. It annoys me when I see ads that say they are the one stop underground connection or the best underground, etc. Fuck all that shit. We're all in this together, and we're all looking for the same thing. So I just do what I do. I don't claim it special or different or the most brutal magazine. It's just Brutalized. When you see my ads, it's just talks about the issue and who's in it, how much it costs, and if you want it then send it to this address, if not then I don't give a fuck. The only thing for me as the originator or creator of the zine, for anybody who's followed me from my first issue, it's obviously a lot more professional now, but I don't think that's what makes it different. If I had to pick one thing about it then, it would be my loyalty and dedication to the underground and to the brutal and extreme genres of music. What I mean by that is, if you look at the zine, yeah there are 300 reviews and 20 interviews or whatever, but 90% of the material covered has been by unsigned bands in every issue. The bands that are interviewed on a label are there because I like them, not because a label asked me to do it. In that way, I'm still thinking of the ideals and principles from when I started Brutalized that it's for the underground. Granted if a band's on a label don't get tour support, yeah they still may be underground, but they've got at least some help. The demo level bands and the more and more bands who are self-financing they own CD's, that is what Brutalized is for. It's to help them get out there. That's one of the main reasons why distribution is so important to me, because the more people, distros, countries

that I can get Brutalized in, then that's the more readers and more nationalities that will read about their band. So if anything about the zine that is original, and this is what my readers are telling me as well, it's that I stuck with my original ideals to be as underground as possible and that 90% of the material covered is good old fashioned brutal death metal.

Okay, give me the info on your latest issue #5. Such as how many you printed up, and how many you have gotten rid of and sold. I know that those two numbers are quite different for many.

As of for #5, for this the date of this interview during the first week of June is all but sold out. I've got about 50 copies left, and at the rate they are going Bart, I don't expect them to last past the end of this month. My original pressing I had 1,000 done, and I was gone through in about two and a half months. I printed another 500 here locally, because as you know Small Publisher's Co-oP no longer does printing runs under 1,000. I spent way too much money and got 500 printed up which cost me 75% of what it cost to get the original 1,000 done. I didn't want to do another 1,000 copy run though because I didn't want to be stuck with the over issue of when #6 comes out. So total I had 1,500 made, and I have 50 left and they'll be gone soon. As far as sold, this is another question I really don't want to answer, but I guess you could take this anyway you want, because a lot of the people who do the zines say they don't sell, and that distros don't want them and this and that. Well, I've had no problems at all in actually selling, and I'd say I've sold about 65% of the zines myself. As for getting rid of, as you know there are lots of zine trades that are always going on, and all the labels that get your zine, but I think the people who are actually buying the zines out shadow those that get it for free or in trade. Sales wise I've done pretty good. I, more than anyone, have been totally surprised.

You're working on #6 right now. You've told me that you've had plenty of delays with this one. What's the info for #6.

Ah Christ...who knows....you tell me. Basically, I have finally started to get some of the interviews back. As for when it's going to be out and who's in it here we go. By the time #5 of Intellektual Spew 'zine is out, my sixth issue should be out. Because if Bart's fifth issue is out before my sixth is out, I think I'm giving it up. (laughing) These are the interviews that I've already gotten: Hammerfall, Disgorge from Mexico, Lividity, Pessimist, Edenrot, Divination, a super hellish, in-depth interview with Wes of Midnight 666 Distro. and record label, Jungle Rot, Sabbatic Feast, Dying Fetus, Immolation, Iniquity and Morta Skuld.

Well hell, you made it sound like you only had a couple interviews back...

Oh yeah, and Primal Fear. I'm still waiting at this time for seven more that have been out for over three months. And pretty much if they do come in, they're probably not going to be printed anyway. As for reviews, I've got the usual hundreds of reviews. I'm sitting here looking at them now, and I've still got two boxes to go. So you can expect, I would say, just as many if not more reviews in #6 that appeared in #5. So I'm guessing about 500 reviews probably. It should if all goes well have a glossy cover again. I am beginning to put serious thought into just scrapping the glossy cover and going to 10,000 copies and just handing it out free everywhere. The only down part of that would be that, not that my label support right is great, I think getting ad space would be a lot harder because a lot of people look for that glossy cover when it comes to ad support. I don't think they care if it's color or in black and white, but just that it's glossy. I think it's just more professional looking. It just looks nicer no matter how small the picture is, it just looks a hell of a lot better. You can plan on another 48 pages, possible 64, but hoping not, and a black and white glossy cover. I would like to go to a bare minimum of 3,000 copies with #6 because 1,500 just won't cut it anymore. Due to finances and such, all of this cannot be guaranteed.

Is Chris Ross still helping you out with the magazine?

No, and I want you to please print word for word everything I'm going to say. This is really important. For anybody reading this, Chris Ross from Massachusetts is in no way shape or form affiliated with Brutalized at all anymore. He did a few reviews and an interview in my fifth issue, and has since cut off all ties with me. I have gotten letters from bands that said that they sent him material, and they've not heard from him. I don't know what the fuck he's doing. So if anybody out there that is reading this, he has nothing to do with me anymore. Please do not bad mouth me or talk shit about me because I have no control over what he did with your merchandise. If you know a band or are in a band, and you sent him something, it will not be getting reviewed in Brutalized. He does have a few things that are reviewed that will appear in #6 that he finished before he started doing whatever the fuck he's doing now, and you definitely receive a photo copy of that review. So by the time Bart's new issue comes out, and you're reading this, my new issue should be out. So contact me if you have any questions, comments, etc or if you want to try to get your stuff back from him then write to me, and I'll be more than glad to give you his address. That is really important to me. I worked very, very hard at having a good reputation, and to the best of my knowledge there is nobody out there, at least from what I've heard, that has been talking shit about me, and I'd like to keep it that way. I can hear Bart laughing right now, but that's really important to me. So that's the deal with Chris. I'm solo now, and I will stay solo forever. I had asked him, and I thought it would be a good idea, but believe it or not, everybody told me it wouldn't be a good idea, but now I know. I tried it, and it didn't work so I will be solo from now on until I die. I will have some contributors and there's actually more people I'd want to ask if they'd be willing to contribute. Some of the people you can look forward to contributing to the zine is Jill from Mortal Coil, Wes from Midnight 666, and there are also two other people that I want to ask, but primarily everything is going to be me again. So if you liked Chris's interviews and reviews, sorry, tough shit. If you hate mine, then too bad, fuck you and buy another magazine. John of course is still with me. For those that got my fifth issue, he is the boss at the record store that I work at, he has contributed a hell of a lot more reviews for this upcoming issue. I actually think his reviews are getting better.

I did not know about that. The more people I talk to, the luckier I realize I am with Jeff being my co-writer now.

I hope everything works out for you okay Bart I really do. Jeff is doing the same thing that Chris did with me. He's jumping on your coat tails. You've worked so hard to get where you are at, but I don't have to explain all that. Man, I'm talking like a fucking book.

(laughing) Let's see, what is some new material that has come out recently that has really blown you away?

I was hoping you would ask me this question Bart because everyone reading this must buy the new Hellchild. They are the most underrated, unknown, ungodly band on the face of this planet. They are from Japan, and they have a new, well it came out in '97, but their album called Circulating Contradictions, and it'll just fuck you up. That band is fantastic. Other than that, god...there is a ton of shit. Cryptopsy of course who are one of my all time favorite bands, the most recent Ton demo Blind Follower is great, Tramatism from Canada, Lividity of course is one of my old favorites, new

Acheron is pretty good, as well as the new Impaled Nazarene. Anything by Sodom or Tankard. That's pretty much it for anything that's constantly in my stereo right now. The new Hellchild is the shit, and I must listen to that everyday or I cannot go through life.

Okay, how many magazines do you normally trade with?

Ah hell, I couldn't even tell you. Lots. I would say probably in between 100 and 200. It almost doubled from #4 to #5. Yeah, probably about a hundred or so. I'm constantly always getting the letter that says "Hi my name is such and such, do you wanna trade zines?" Plus I always go out of my way to trade with any zines. I don't care where you are from or what the postage is as long as it's written in English. If it's not, I will send it back but I can't fucking read it. I write to a lot of zines myself, and whenever I get ads in an envelope, I look at every single one, and if I like the bands that they interviewed I will write to them to see if they want to trade. I do trade a lot. I'm not like Chris from Metal-Core, but I'm getting up there.

What magazines in particular do you personally like? I know that you constantly rave about Headfucker.

Well, it would be the first one that I would mention. Headfucker from Italy...if you haven't seen it yet, buy it. If you don't want to buy it, then you should get out of the scene right now because you are missing the best death metal magazine ever. A couple people have told me that I kiss her ass, but I'm sorry, I don't kiss her ass. She is the example for all to follow. I only wish my magazine looked a tenth as good as hers does. Everyone should support Headfucker. For everyone that says death metal is dying, stagnant, dead or whatever, all have you to do is look at her issue. All she covers is nothing but the brutal stuff, and I commend her and give her respect for that. Other than her, Metal-Core is always a favorite. You will not find more in-depth interviews anywhere. Feoticide from Bolivia. His first issue I thought was really, really good. Intellektual Spew is one of my favorites from the U.S., and I've told a lot of people that. I think you are definitely one of the ones in the U.S. and probably the whole underground who is making a name for yourself. As far as consistency, quality, productivity and your general overall support for the scene. You're definitely one of the better ones. Coroner's Report I loved, but unfortunately Chris has decided he's going to do one more issue and give it up due to college. I always liked his. The New Breed from Ohio is pretty good. Satan's Candy Basket for a newcomer is really, really good. I commend Burt, for only doing two issues he's going to blow me away by his third. He's really got a good one there. That's all I really can think of. I love Mortal Coil, but I keep bitching at her that she needs more pages now. If you could support only three zines though then I would recommend Headfucker, Intellektual Spew and Mortal Coil.

"Chris Ross from Massachusetts is in no way shape or form affiliated with Brutalized at all anymore."

Damn man thanks. I know you've gotten a distro going now. How is it doing?

Actually, believe it or not, it's doing really well. I'm once again surprised by the amount of orders and feedback that I've gotten about it, because I've not even done it but for two month now. It's doing pretty good. I've got a fair list of stuff. It's got about 75 things on it. I carry CD's, demos, shirts, zines, 7"s and full-length albums. Anybody who wants a list, just call, fax or write. You don't have to send a stamp, but if you are overseas if you could include a dollar or an i.r.c. it would be appreciated, but it is not necessary. I will answer all mail I get regardless. The only other thing I want to add about my distro is that on my distro you will probably find a lot of stuff you probably won't find in normal distribution, because I'm not afraid to give "unknown" bands distribution, and in fact I welcome it. What I mean by that is, if you would get my distro list, you would probably think that you haven't heard of some of the bands. You'll probably find that a lot. When I first started Brutalized, I know what it was like trying to get distribution. Nobody wants to give you a chance. Well, I'm more than happy to give anybody a chance. I do pay outright. I also do trades, but I do have to do some consignment. Because paying outright costs a lot of fucking money, and most of the stuff on my list I did buy outright. So if anybody wants a list, feel free to contact me, and you'll get one.

Damn this has been a long interview so let's wrap this fucker up. Anything you'd like to say in closing?

Sure. I want to thank you for the interview Bart. This was actually my first phone interview, and it feels kinda weird. I'm used to doing them through the mail. I'd like to thank you for the opportunity and the space for letting me ramble in your mag. It is appreciated. I would also like to extend an immense metal gratitude to all my supporters who've gotten me this far, because I say this in all honesty. I would have never ever expected to be remotely close to where I'm at right now for only my fifth issue. It just seems like that from day one I've just snowballed, and I have a lot of loyal supporters out there. My subscribers...I appreciate all the support. The people who've bought from my distro from day one and give me half their paychecks, it's truly honestly appreciated. I just want to tell all those assholes that say brutal death metal is dead, dying, stagnant, boring, whatever. I just want to send an open message to all you people. I don't think the scene is dying, or that death metal is dying. I think your integrity is dying. There are a lot of people out there who were all death metal a couple years ago, but now that it doesn't sell anymore you wanna denounce it. Well fuck you. That's bullshit. Don't go ragging on death metal. There's enough kinds of music for everybody, and don't be afraid to try a new band. Write these bands, zines and distros. Go to the live shows when the come around. The only thing I wanna add to concerning my distro, is that I've also got a small video service available. I'm looking to trade bootleg and gore flicks with anybody. If you've got a list, no matter how small, I'm really desperately looking for new video traders. In fact, I'm buying ad space solely for this fact. So, if you read this and you've got a list then write me. I'm looking for video traders. Primarily gore, but I've got smut, gore, death, torture, rape, animation, fucking you name it. It's all there. Other than that, I thank you Bart once again. I guess that's it. Thanks man.

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Label Spew

Aborted – s/t
Esophagus Records
Sven of Esophagus Records was very cool to have dubbed me two releases on one tape. This band was the first of the two (the second being Spinebender). The music though is some great death/grind that I like a lot. The music blasts along at times, then slows down to crank out some cool riffing then gets right back to the blasting. I can see this band causing a lot of violence in the pit, and what glorious violence it would be. For a dub, the production on this release is pretty damn good too. I would think the actual release (that everyone one of you should buy after reading this) would have total crushing sound. Fans of a less crusty/grind Agathocles would fucking love this as much as I do. Great release. (Bart)

Adnauseam – Desire, Aspire, Inspire, Expire
Independent Sickness/Horror Shop Records
I do not know why, but I have never seen the big deal with this band. Since back to the days of their last demo, I haven't ever been able to get into this quirky grind band. I thought they had gone the way of the dinosaur lately, because I haven't heard about any new material from them in quite a while, but then this shows up in my mailbox. It is an eight song affair that lasts almost forty-five minutes. After playing it a good number of times, I find nothing here that even in the slightest way catches my interest. The band blasts away at times, but the music goes nowhere and has no real aggression. The band slows things down quite often to speed of such bands at Grief or Noothgrush, but instead of adding variety to the music, it just makes me look for the skip button. The drumming is something that particularly irritates me seeming out of step with the music half the time, and the snare is loud enough to drown out the quieter guitars. The vocals are pretty guttural with the occasional higher pitched growl, but for the most part they add nothing to the music. Nothing, and I repeat, nothing new or original is offered here. Stay away. There is much better grind and/or sludge out there to spend your money on. (Bart)

Aeternus- ...and So the Night Became
Hammerheart Records
This just got in under the deadline, and ever since I have finished reviewing all the other CD's, I have left this CD for last. I keep finding myself listening to this album repeatedly. Hearing great things about this band is one thing, but now that I have heard their material, I can earnestly say that every black metal fan should seek out this album. This full-length, the band's first, starts off with a soft ambient type piece that shows some tribal and folk influence. After the music kicks in, the heavy influence of classical music becomes more apparent to me since that was the band's strong point previously so I had read. The band plays some smooth, very well orchestrated black metal. It doesn't come out slick or commercial sounding at all. The vocals are varied, but the standard black metal rasp is the mainstay for the vocals. He bellows a higher pitched in some songs, and it just so perfectly eerie. The entire album has a haunting feeling about it, but it's that beautifully haunted feel that demands you delve deeper in the music instead of turning away from it. I'm not sure I can adequately describe the beautiful darkness of this album. It must be witnessed firsthand. (Bart)

Altar – Provoke
Displeased Records
I have been a fan of this since their first album, Youth Against Christ, came out. This album follows along in quite the same vein of their last full-length Alter Ego. It is definitely death metal, but again has a touch of thrash surfaces from time to time. The vocals are still deep and rough, and they are strong as they've ever been. Not many here in the states seem to know of this band here in the states, but hopefully that will change with the U.S. office of Repulse Records helping distribute them here in the states. Things do seem to fall into mediocrity with the last few songs, but the majority of the album is damn good. Cover of the album is one of the best you'll see this year as well. Buy this album to see the cover and hear the great death metal as well. (Bart)

The Ancients Rebirth – Damnated Hells Arrival
Necropolis Records.
Another new signing from the Necropolis horde comes The Ancients Rebirth from Sweden playing metallic blackened metal. This mini CD becomes quite catchy after a few listens. The music on Damnated Hell's Arrival is lively, moving around a lot, being fast one moment and slowing to chop along the next. Because the music moves around a lot, the band does good in holding your attention throughout the thirty minutes of running time. Also put forth is a speedy cover of Kreator's classic "Flag of Hate" track which is pretty decent as well. Not limited to blasts and two chord songs, The Ancients Rebirth try their hand at real structured pieces with frantic solos and actual song writing, only to go off into a blistering frenzy that even then catches your ear. After an up and down beginning, The Ancients Rebirth seem to have found a home with the horde and are out for metallic destruction! Look out! (Jeff)

...And Here I Lie – Regrets
Bleak Autumn Records
Here we have an emotional doom act out of New York. ...And Here I Lie create somber moods with clean voice over quiet rhythms that flow with various soothing tempos. The first half of Regrets comes across as more mellow until their fluted acoustic piece "Far Away" (which is finely crafted) makes way for the more guitar oriented half of the album, and this is where the band demands attention the most. There is a coldness to their writing style, due to their sound and especially in part to their structuring ability, revolving around guitar and voice. As the slow moving riffs crawl along, you begin to realize what a good listen this is throughout its near hour duration. Having a dark soothing quality to its overall makeup, if ...And Here I Lie were a color, it would surely be gray, for it sighs of bleak coldness and utter melancholy, deep rooted in doom for all to see. (Jeff)

Arch Enemy – Stigmata
Century Media
This is one of those albums that instantly hits you as soon as you put it on and you can't stop listening to it. With their new signing to Century Media, Arch Enemy being us their second album, Stigmata, which further improves upon their great debut Black Earth. Stigmata picks up where Black Earth left off, showing the band developing its progressive heavy/death metal talents even further. This album has a maturity about it that their previous full-length didn't quite have. The song writing on Stigmata seems to have become more involved, with intricate technical like moods being the basis for each brilliant track. With the production quality stepped up a notch as well, each track is clearly accessible. Melody appears to be a key element within this new offering, while not being overly used, it flows over a strong powerful back bone of heavy rhythm laid down by the Amott brothers. Along with progressed maturity and song writing, Arch Enemy has stepped up the speed factor a bit as well, along with adding a touch of synth throughout. Every element of Stigmata equals extreme catchiness, from the uniquely gruff vocals to the sharp melodic leads down to the aggressive rhythms and progressive instrumentals. This is a great album, destined to become one of the best of the year. (Jeff)

Arckanum – Kampen
Necropolis Records
I liked Shamaatae's last album under the name of Kostogher, but felt the production needed to

!Highly Recommended!

Bethlehem – Sardonischer Untergang im Zeichen irreligiöser Darbietung
Red Stream
I'm at a loss for words when it comes to describing this new release. I was shocked to find the band had asked Landfermann to leave, because his incredible vocal job on Dictius te Necare was the crowning jewel for many on that album. This new album is by far the best material Bethlehem has ever released. The band now employs two different vocalists. Marco Kehran does the deeper growls as well as a wail that is similar to that of Abruptum. Cathrin Campen does a scream that many would find quite similar to Landfermann's as well as some spoken word in places. The music is still a mix of death, black and doom, but the overall effect is one of utter depression and angst. The album is strange, and will take some listens to fully grasp, but what a epic journey it is. I cannot even imagine another album even approaching the greatness of this album here in '98. A true masterpiece for the whole metal scene to enjoy. (Bart)

be cleaned up regardless if that is how he wanted it. The new album is definitely a continuation of the last, but everything just seems to have improved a great deal. The production unfortunately is still rather weak, but for some reason it doesn't affect the listening experience as much this time. The actual music is still raw, fast black metal. The real pleasure is all the nuances that Shamaatae adds now. The mixture of synth and nature sounds blends in perfectly to make for a very listenable record. The vocals that Shamaatae uses are very blackened, and actual do add to the darkness. The occasional clean vocal line is another one of the nuances that adds to this album. Black metal fans should know of Arckanum by now, and in my opinion this is the best album for Arckanum to date. Definitely worth searching out and getting a copy for yourself. (Bart)

Ashes You Leave – The Passage Back of Life
Morbid Records
I could barely get through the first few songs of this Croatian band's full-length of heavy melancholic death/doom. This is uninteresting in the riffs department both structure wise and execution wise. Complacently clean vocals with subtle keyboarding that crawls along at an maddening pace at times. It's hard to believe this is being released by Morbid Records. It's hardly morbid but definitely boring. What more can I say? (Jeff)

Assück – Misery Index
Sound Pollution Records
Why this band is overlooked by the majority of the metal community is beyond me. They can grind/blast with the best of them in the underground. Each song is a short blasting dose of fury that few bands are able to actually deliver. I can now attest to the fact that the band is able to pull this off live as well. I can't compare this to their earlier material since I've never heard it, but all grind fans would love this. The punk scene loves this band. It does have just a touch of a crust in it, but they compare more along the lines of other bands in this issue reviewed like Nasum and Benümb. Get this band's material and support them regardless of which scene you affiliate yourself with. The music is that good. (Bart)

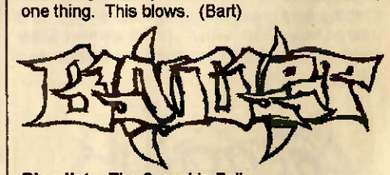
Bal-Sagoth – Battle Magic
Cacophonous Records
All bow and kneel for the mighty Bal-Sagoth, for they hath returned for thrice a victory! Hail! This is truly an epic album that outdoes any of the band's previous works. Bal-Sagoth take their brand of ferocious metal forged with the most unique of unique synth work on aeon further to complete their first trilogy. With such an abundance of material created on each offering, it's truly amazing as to how this band of four individuals craft such wrath. The Maulding brothers create the metallic poems of mighty vocals, being severely, powerful both clean as well as maddeningly black. Their raw talent is combined in such a way that beings the very best of metal alive with the utmost mystical, as tales of epic battles of might and blood shed are told to round out this massive fold. To say that every other aspect of this slate is awesome would be needless...for the greatest of quality is taken in care of both artwork and packaging throughout this twenty page (fifty minute) journey. Bal-Sagoth are without a doubt one of the greatest creative forces on our modern times. Hail!! (Jeff)

Battlelust – Of Battle and Ancient Warcraft
Hammerheart Records
The beautiful packaging is what first struck me when I got this in the mail. The digi-pak with this CD is gorgeous. The medieval scenery goes perfectly with the name of the band as well as with the lyrics. The music is just as great in my eyes as well. They play some slick Swedish death metal which would compare to a more violent At the Gates, and other times the riffing does sound familiar to Dark Funeral. There are ten tracks on this album, and every single one flies by at a breakneck pace. The vocals are quite acidic and very effective. The production is a bit weak compared to some, but it is more than adequate, and nothing is lost in the mix. I can see both fans of the Swedish death and black metal getting into this. Well worth searching out and adding to your collection. (Bart)

Benediction – Grind Bastard
Nuclear Blast
Ah, the godly Benediction hath returned! And in fine fashion none-the-less! It has been over three years, but the wait has been well worth it, and it seems as if these Englishmen have been fine tuning their skills during this time because Grind Bastard crushes! Bloody heavy! Not only is this album heavier than Rush Limbaugh, but it contains some of the most captivating songwriting this side of Sweden, but they also get fucking fast! FAST! The fastest in years in fact! On the other hand, they have a new found groove like attitude that radiates power throughout showing a new and interesting side of the band which proves they were never down for the count (see I told you...Ha!). Just the opposite in fact, and it still brings a big grin to my face to hear Ingram's godly vocals, some of the best in the scene and more powerful than ever. Also included is their version of Priest's "Hellion/Electric Eye" which is great except for the chorus is sung too slow. Other than this, I cannot say one bad thing about this album. Who said death metal was dead? Fuck you! Benediction says otherwise! If this doesn't make you bang your head then nothing will! If all goes according to plan look out for these guys in #6 of Intellektual Spew. Now get goin'! (Jeff)

Benümb – Soul of the Martyr
Relapse Records
Fans of Agarophobic Nosebleed and Anal Cunt should have already heard of this band, but if they haven't by now, they will soon with this crushing release. Violent, abrupt songs fill this CD. Thirty-five songs in fact make up this forty-five minute CD. The band also took an unusual direction with not listing the lyrics, but instead listing all the people they thanked and giving the address for all the bands and labels that they have worked with. The first twenty-one songs are originals, thirteen are taken from previous 7" they have done, and finally it has one last song which is quick live show they did. It has eight individual songs during the live set, and the last one is a Slayer cover of "Reign in Blood". Great stuff here that ends up in my CD player quite often. (Bart)

Beseech – ...From a Bleeding Heart
Metal Blade Records
I have to give my apologies to Metal Blade and to the readers of this magazine. I hate this CD so much I can't even give it a complete spin to give it a proper review. I end up hitting stop on the CD way before the end every time. This is supposed to be some type of heavy gothic metal. It is not beautiful, heavy or even interesting. It pisses me off in fact. It's that irritating. The little acoustic parts in between the songs are too sweet and happy for gothic metal. The band photo even irks me because one guy is wearing a pentagram while the other is wearing a cross. Am I being petty? Fuck yeah I am, but regardless of how detailed a review I gave to you for this album, it'll still say one thing. This blows. (Bart)



Bloodlet – The Seraphin Fall
Victory Records
Was extremely happy to have this CD end up in my hands. Their last album, Entheogen, was a great depressive yet angst filled listen. This new album by Bloodlet is just as good if not better because they show some growth with this album. The songs show more thought, and it

takes several listens to fully sink it's claws into you. I don't even consider this band hardcore regardless of the label they are on, because this is metal through and through. Thick driving riffs plod along will the vocalist screams on top of it all. His vocals are hardcore but lend themselves to that singer of the metal band Believer. I have seen this band live since the new release, and they go over incredibly well. This isn't a band you mosh to or sing along with. You stand there and revel in the suppressed anger of it all. This is a band that you rid your anger of through them. Not your typical Victory band or release, and that's my final reason as to why you shouldn't even delay in getting this immediately. (Bart)

Boiler – The NEW Professionals
Mayhem Records
Pretty tough album for me to make it through. The likeness to Korn early on is so huge, that I start to get into my "I hate Korn clones" mood. They shift gears though as the disc moves on to a more straight up hard rock/metal approach. They do at least three different vocal styles: one sounding like Phil of Sacred Reich, one of Oderous of Gwar, and then a rapping style that I hate. The later songs do show some promise, but the songs leave me empty afterwards. The song "Defleshed" is the keeper for me though on this album. It mixes their Korn touch with some heavy metal riffing, and it reminds me of a slower Sacred Reich because of the vocals also. The song is pretty heavy, and would be great live. Unfortunately I wouldn't want to see these guys live just to hear one good song amongst all the duds. Maybe next time... (Bart)

A Canorous Quintet – The Only Pure Hate
No Fashion Records
Was quite happy to get this and popped it in my CD player almost instantly because I was a big fan of their first full-length Silence of the World Beyond. The first note they hit brought back memories of their first album, because it is still along in the same vein of Swedish death, but taking a lot from the more violent sounds of Dissection. The production is strong, and all instruments are well mixed giving a nice full sound to this album. It was recorded in Sunlight Studios with the help of Thomas Skogsberg so you would expect nothing less than great sound. The music of A Canorous Quintet unfortunately isn't as memorable or catchy as before though. I remember loving some of the wicked riffs they have had in the past, while most of the songs here fall flat. With the exception of the powering opening for the first song, "Selfdeceiver", I find little to keep fans such as myself interested. I never really considered this band that original in the past, it was just that they did it so well, that the originality factor could be overlooked. Things have changed, and I can't really recommend this. There are better bands out there currently putting out stronger material than this. Oh well... (Bart)

Children of Bodom – Something Wild
Nuclear Blast Records
Hadn't heard much promotion about this band until it found it's way into my mailbox. Interesting stuff here that finds a decent mix of black metal and more traditional heavy metal. Their use of keyboards gives the listener that grand sound that Dimmu Borgir and Covenant are so good at doing. Aside from the keyboards they are quite similar to Dimmu Borgir as well, but you have to add in some slower Tiamat influences to mix things up. Sound is quite good, and the eight songs on here do please my ears although I don't think there is enough to make this band truly stand above the rest. There are some nice ideas here with the mixture of melody, speed and chamber music style synths, but I'm not convinced this is a mandatory purchase. It does though make for a great occassional listen. (Bart)

Clutch – The Elephant Riders
Columbia Records
This act has cranked out some strange yet very enjoyable albums in the past. They are now on a new label, and they have shifted the direction of the music slightly. Sounds like they've been listening to some Black Sabbath and other 70's rock bands. They've taken their funky brand of metal and added that touch to it. The songs on the whole are a bit slower, but no less enjoyable. Neil Falon stills relates his strange stories, and I still wonder what kind of drugs he has to do to come up with these off the wall topics. Of course the sound quality is top notch considering their label, and you should be able to find this everywhere as well for the same reason. This album is far from the most brutal or extreme recording you'll see reviewed here, but that doesn't mean it's any less recommended. (Bart)

Cradle of Filth – Cruelty and the Beast
Fierce/Mayhem Records
Well, they are back for another full-length attack, and love or hate 'em, they have put out an undeniably great album. They have moved away from black metal a bit more with this release. Their death metal influence is quite recognizable here, but it's still definitely Cradle of Filth. One change I have noticed that I'm kinda disappointed in is that Dani does not go apeshit with his vocals as much as he used to in the past. He is a bit more controlled this album, but the vocals are still stellar this release. Their mix of gothic and vampire overtones is just as prevalent as always. The cover follows along with the main theme of Lady Bathory who bathed in the blood of virgins, and the realistic cover is both artistic and not cheesy at all (definitely an improvement there for C.o.F.). The instruments are all played well, and the drumming like always is a strong point for myself. The addition of other effects through the keyboards or samples just adds to the overall aura of Cradle of Filth. This is another great album for these Brits, and anyone choosing not to purchase this based solely on Cradle of Filth's attitude in the underground would be cheating themselves of a wonderful album. (Bart)

Cranium – Speed Metal Slaughter
Necropolis Records
For some reason I was looking forward to this release even though I found their EP, Speed Metal Satan, to be hit or miss for my personal tastes. From the second the opening skit, which sports metalheads raiding a techno club, till the very end of this retro-thrash release, I was fully into this. This music and emotion of the music is exhilarating, and I can get into every second of it even if the humor does get a bit camp at times. The riffing is the mainstay for this retro band as it should be for any band of this genre. They are sharp, catchy and force even the less inclined to headbang along to the music. The vocals show multiple personalities, and I don't remember that being prevalent on the EP though I could be wrong. The riffing is mid-tempo speed for the most part, with some fast parts at the crucial times in the songs. The guitar solos are plentiful and fit the music. The drum solo is my only gripe. It's just boring, and since it leads into "Sluts For Satan", I am forced to fast forward through it or just sit through it. If it was it's own track I'd be less bitchy about that point. Fave songs are the previously mentioned "Sluts For Satan" and "Slaughter on the Dance Floor." Very recommended although some with less patience for retro may find some of the attitude and vocals a bit trying on the nerves. Still a great album no matter how you look at it. (Bart)

Danielle Howle and the Tantrums – Do a Two
Sable
Daemon Records
Don't worry....you're not the only one who hasn't heard of this band. This sounds like the material our college radio station plays frequently. I couldn't help but like the song "You Came A Knockin'" with it's happy, folky melody, but the rest will be forgettable and/or annoying to most of the readers of this magazine. You like acoustic college rock along the lines of the Indigo Girls? Good then get this. Otherwise I'd recommend not to bother. (Bart)

Dark Funeral – Vobiscum Satanas
No Fashion Records
Finally it is here, the greatly anticipated return of Dark Funeral. This is an album I've been really anxious to hear, having been waiting with curiosity for near two years. When the news broke that the band was on the verge of folding some time ago and three of the four original members were gone, I was skeptical as to whether D.F. could retain its true identity. And the verdict? Well, against all odds, only remaining original member Lord Ahriman (guitar) has reassembled a horde that rivals the original. Beginning in fine fashion, D.F. blast forth sporting superb production courtesy of producer extrodinare Peter Tägtgren and Abyss studios. Vobiscum Satanas is pure chaos, taking elements previously forged by the band and violently accenting on them to bring forth madness tenfold. D.F.'s sound has been altered a bit (as expected) by new life and production, having a heavier, somewhat fuller sound while the style remains undeniably Dark Funeral. Riffs blaze along combining to create layers of dark harmonies, almost orchestra like, stabbing their way into your mind, fusing with lightening fast drumming that can all break at once to throw your ass to the floor. The vocals original main man, Themgoroth, are missed who's ravings were godly, now replaced by an Ishan (Emperor) sound a like, although at times deeper. Another twist to consider is that a nod to somewhat of a slower somber like passages has been added, showing a progression in song writing. These devil worshipping die-hards have created a truly powerful album that beckons darkness. Get it before it gets you! (Jeff)

Dead Infection- The Greatest Shits
Obscene Productions
I put this in with eager anticipation to hear some of Dead Infection's classic Carcass worship grind. The first song is a "psalm" about computers, and since it's not in English my American ass can't understand it. I look inside and realize that this is a cover album of sorts for Dead Infection. Second track is Regurgitate

cover of "Total Dismemberment of a Female". Rest of the album consists of covers of Extreme Noise Terror's "Raping the Earth," Agathocles's "Clean the Scene," General Surgery's "Slithering Maceration of Ulcerous Facial Tissue," Bee Gees's "Staying Alive," Ulcerous Phlegm's "Consequences," Napalm Death's "Prison Without Walls," and Carcass's version of "Pungent Excruciation." The vocals do try to shift somewhat to fit the band that they are covering, but the music is still the blast grind that we know from Dead Infection. The fourth and ninth songs are gabber techno songs, and they're okay, but not so great that they should have been included in here. The only thing they did to the Bee Gees's cover by the way is that they added blast to the drums while they keep the original vocals and such. After giving this a few listens, I'm ready to put it away now. I would only recommend this to Dead Infection fans only. (Bart)

Deeds of Flesh – Inbreeding the Anthropophagi
Repulse Records
Brutal death/grind. There's not a whole lot I can find to say about Deeds of Flesh. Other than they sound like Deicide jacked up on speed, musically anyway. Inbreeding the Anthropophagi is eight tracks and thirty minutes of insanely fast, brutal death. While this would seem like ingredients for some great death, I find my attention for the most part beginning to wander after a few tracks of this. This album is but a mirror image of their last album Trading Pieces. Only this time they've managed to achieve a slightly better production. While I can't say I'm crazy about this, it is competent by all means, and I really would like to see this pulled off live. That would be insane. (Jeff)

Desekrator – Metal For Demons
Hammerheart Productions
This is fuckin' weird. It seems as if members of Gorgoroth and Enslaved (along with various other persons) have gotten together for some type of retro/thrash project. This album can be quite annoying at times because each song is vastly different from the last, and the majority of the material is somewhat lackluster. Had the entire album been like the title (and opening) track, this would have been a lot better of an album. Everything from old style retro Destruction like to Gorgorothish material to rockin' dirty trash metal and everything else in between they can find to goof on is tried here ("Texas Joe" is hilarious!). It's almost hard to believe anyone would release this on CD. I've heard better demos definitely. I think these guys were at the pub a little too long before recording this. It's up to you. (Jeff)

Doomstone – Church of Nightmares
Nazgul Errie Records
After nearly five years since the release of its debut 7" and full-length, King Fowley (from Deceased, but better known to Doomstone fans as "Cross Turner Upside Downer") and his nameless buddies return to fly high the flag of its sacrilegious heavy metal once more. This is one album that I have been wondering about for a long while now, so upon receiving an advance for it from King, I was quite thrilled to say the least. This second album is notably different from the first, having a more traditional edge to it and less of a death metal one this time, and no Grim Reaper cover (Damn!). The nine tracks of Church of Nightmares have a slower vibe (at times almost rock like – in a good way!) and rely on more of a rhythmic base rather than being as chaotic as before, yet still packs that solid metal punch we've come to expect from these guys. Another notable change is "Vomit's" (Satan's praises and lead vocals) absence and King's made for metal voice in its place, being not too harsh and not too clean – lying somewhere in between the two, coming out very much discernible. A wild sacrilegious ride of heavy metal and spirit that should please any listener of sinister metal! This album is due out on a German label called Nazgul Errie Records, as of print time no further info is known and the record label address is unknown to us presently, but definitely contact King for further information. Hail Satan! (Jeff)

!Highly Recommended!
Dying Fetus – Killing on Adrenaline
Morbid Records
Oh what a glorious day it was to get this release. I have been a long time fan of this band, and this is their debut release off Morbid Records. Those of you in the past who loved this band will definitely dig this release. Those of you though that didn't care for their previous material may want to give this a chance though. It is still definitely death metal, but they have stepped up the technical aspects a bit though. The various vocal styles are still present, and they still grunt along with the riffing. The production is strong, and everything is crystal clear in my opinion. This is some grindy death metal at its best, and since it's not really doing anything outstanding original some may scoff at it. It's their loss in my opinion, because they are so good it's easy to overlook that discrepancy. I can't recommend this enough for death metal fans. (Bart)

Edenrot – Land Where the Crow Starves
Twilight Records
Hearing a plethora of good things about a band seems to be an omen of tough times ahead for me, because many times bands do not live up to the hype for myself. After repeated spins of this EP, it's apparent though how this band has gotten their notoriety. This is some excellent, well-played metal. A strange mix though of traditional metal, black metal and doom. There are three different vocal styles in use here. One higher pitched scream that resembles black metal style, a deeper growl more akin to death metal, and finally a clean style. This clean style reminded me very strongly of a previous band, and it took me a while to pull up the band from my memory. The clean vocals sound similar to that of Death Angel from the ballad on Act III. Like I said, the music is well played, and fans of intricate yet delicate riffing will be quite happy with this release. The mix on this album is quite nice as well. Weak points? Can't find any really. I haven't heard this band's previous material to compare it to, but I am encouraged to hear their previous material. Very recommended. (Bart)

Einherjer – Odin Owns Ye All
Century Media Records
Well, the Viking trend has been continued by Einherjer. They have just released this new album. It's immediately obvious this material isn't as heavy as their earlier material, but that is not a big deal because the material has shown a lot of growth in song writing. The first song "Out of Ginnungagap" starts off with a very catchy riff, then the vocals of Viske kick in with his melodic, clean style that does justice to the music. If the music wasn't intertwined with Viking influence, it would be some solid traditional heavy metal. The chorus parts will cause the crowds who see this band live to sing along, and bang their heads along to the beat. It's pretty damn good here, but I know this band will just slay live. The guitar work is quite nice and has a nice melodic yet heavy feel to it. The band is doing something original here, and I'm glad to see that Century Media will be trying to give it the exposure it deserves. (Bart)

Enthroned – Towards the Skulithrone of Satan
Death Records
Damn, everything with this release just reeks. The lack of anything interesting or original is almost startling. Black metal by the numbers. The monotonous riffing gets old really fast, and nothing in the way of melody or catchy riffing is thrown in to make up for the lack of ideas. The vocals are typical high-pitched screams, but are buried and not that effective at all. The lyrics are quite funny because they are trying to be so evil. This band shouldn't even be signed, let alone to a larger metal label such as Metal Blade Records. Everything about this release repulses me. (Bart)

EverEve – Stormbirds
Nuclear Blast Records
Quite the great release when I was expecting another round of Moonspell worship like their first release did. It does not take long before you realize that this band has taken it upon themselves to improve their music by adding a large dose of originality to their fodder. The Moonspell comparison is for the most part completely gone now. They are more along the lines of a very heavy My Dying Bride, but the music is much more dynamic. The range of emotions here is quite stunning, and EverEve takes you through them all whether you are ready for them or not. Every song has an intro for it, and most are dark yet beautiful. The songs vary from somber, slow pieces to the faster more aggressive tunes. The production is very good. Sometimes you notice the different recording quality when you go from intro to the actual song, but that is not present here. Great stuff here that I highly recommend for someone looking for emotional music. Those put off by the first album should check this one out before shunning it, because the band has grown by leaps and bounds. Denying this band now would truly be a crime because it is that good. (Bart)

From the Depths – s/t
Dismal Records
This release has been out for two years now and from what I understand is quite limited, but I have just recently gotten it so I thought I'd review it because this is an exceptional band by all means. This release compiles the band's first two demos (which were supposed to be released as a split CD with Decrepit through Dismal but never came about) and has a different vocalist and bassist than present day.

Ever since hearing their '97 promo I was hooked. I personally think this band is among the elite of today (especially within the U.S. scene) standing tall with their near amazing ability to write killer song after song. From the Depths combines a melodic style death with undertones of blackness, which paired their exceptional ability to write results in a truly great and exasperating listen reminiscent of years past. In fact their first full-length is due out anytime now on Candlelight Records, needless to say I can't fucking wait! It's apparent that this band has been great from day one. Get this while you still can (contact Dismal Records in which bassist Duane Morris runs for further info...ask about other F.t.D.'s merch and tell 'em we sent ya!) and in the next issue of the 'Spew look for these guys and be on the look out for their full-length which is upcoming. Fuck that witch! (Jeff)

Fury of Five – At War With the World
Victory Records
I've been bugging Victory Records for a while to see if they'll service this zine because they have some great bands on their label (Hatebreed, Bloodlet, Strife, Integrity, etc), and it wasn't till I got this in the mail that they have seen the light with Intellektual Spew 'zine. Glad to have gotten a copy of this as well, because it's some damn good hardcore. Reminds me of a more rocking and metal tinged version of earlier Biohazard. The vocals are a mix of Biohazard and Crowbar as well. They have some variances at times with the vocals later in the album to keep things fresh though. The repeated chorus does get a bit monotonous to me, but would go over great with a hardcore crowd that likes to sing along with the singer. The sound is fucking great, and thankfully the band chooses to rally their fans together than preach down to them (Earth Crisis anyone?). This isn't the best Victory Records has to offer, but this a great addition to their roster. (Bart)

Paul Gilbert – King of Clubs
Mayhem Records
This is somewhat flashy guitar oriented rock that comes to us from Paul Gilbert, who I think was formerly of Mr. Big. This isn't anything like Mr. Big though, as it's more soft and laid back I suppose. King of Clubs is more for oldtimers as far as I can figure, as its not something I could see many underground fans going nuts for. As mentioned, the basic style here is rock, although there is a lot of different things going on, on any given track. Some are more mellow as most of the album is, while others can get a little upbeat and heavy. There is a cool classical style acoustic piece included and the last track "The Jam" is a twenty minute number that basically is just a jam session with Gilbert showing off his guitar talents that comes off well. While I can't say I'm a fan of this style of music, there's usually something worthwhile to be found of it's remotely good. I'll probably never listen to this again, but I'm sure there's a big audience this will appeal to, just not this one. (Jeff)

Gorewinter – Battleblack
Meat Hook Productions
Violent black metal along the lines of Satyricon is what we have here. The production is weak, and I suspect part of it is due to this being a tape dub of the actual recording, but also part of it being due the actual recording itself. The music is interesting enough to keep my interest, and the band does take some of the medieval influence that early Satyricon had. The music is for the most part, blasts the entire time, but it does slow down from time to time to mix things up. Six songs are here, and the length is a good deal longer than most demos. The cassette release is worth checking out if you're into some obscure black metal from Europe. The music isn't so good that I recommend everyone get in touch, but it is worth notice from the black metal fans. (Bart)

Hammerfall – Glory to the Brave
Nuclear Blast
Here we have the second release by Hammerfall, this mighty traditional power metal act out of Sweden. This is a single for the title track to their '97 LP Glory to the Brave. This single includes the radio edit version of the title track along with the original album version as well. Also included is a cover of Stormwitch's "Ravenlord" (which I can't say that much for as I've never heard the original version, but H.F.'s version did come out great!) and a live version of "I Believe" which comes off well although I would have rather seen them do one of their faster numbers like "Unchained" or "The Dragon Lies Bleeding", but all in all a good live track none the less. This release just serves the purpose of antagonizing those of us who eagerly await the forthcoming full-length. I can't wait! (Jeff)

Hollow – Modern Cathedral
Nuclear Blast
It seems as if Nuclear Blast has picked themselves up a few traditional heavy metal bands lately. And so is the case with Hollow. This band is rather out of character for Nuclear Blast and I'm sure it will take most N.B. enthusiasts by surprise, leaving them scratching their heads. Hollow are a metal band, not going for the thrash, speed or power moniker though. Relying on the traditional side of things while having a 90's edge as well. Hollow capture a production that has an unique air about it while creating a heavy, almost grungy guitar crunch that together with the strong semi-melodic vocals, create the heart of Modern Cathedral. For the most part slow moving pace and truly catchy vocalist, this band keeps you listening,

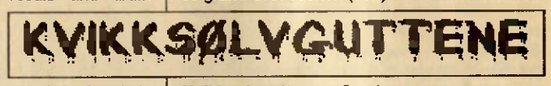
!Highly Recommended!
Epoch of Unlight – What Will Be Has Been
The End Records
Ha! Finally that glorious day has arrived, and the debut full-length of Epoch of Unlight has been unleashed! Soon after signing with The End Records, the band has wasted no time in crafting its first album of splendid extremities worthy of monumental praise. What Will Be Has Been reaches near epic heights within its metal foundation right from the opening moments of "Ad Infinitum" and races toward the unknown throughout its fifty minute duration. Their unique style of melodic metal (interweaving the very best elements of both black and death) is further developed herein, taking its well thought out approach one step beyond. The solid and metallic backbone of the band is accented as never before with the fine production bringing each working element directly to the forefront. Each track comes off as being tightly linked together, with each of the monstrous riffs flowing perfectly in sync amidst the thunderously battered speed changes laid out by drummer Lossico. Epoch appear to leave no point untouched in its journey, with constant pace changes that bring out their massive originality even more so. Next to the powerful lead vocals of Smith (also on guitar), guitarist Robertson steps up to assail all with his nefarious serpentine like vocals which were scarcely introduced on their previous releases. These vocals are truly over the top and add a dark, almost evil quality to the music and aids in capturing that unique atmosphere. Also introduced are the spoken type vocals of Smith effect enhanced to help in achieving an epic feel. It's amazing how with one listen this album takes hold and with repeated listens becomes more and more addictive and increasingly awesome revealing its originality. Blindingly creative and original songwriting performed with technical clarity from a band whose brightest moment has just begun. This album is scheduled for release on October 13th and is destined to be one of the very best of the year! Brilliant!! (Jeff)

each time taking in a little more than the last. This is a refreshing listen all in all that will appeal to those certain individuals. Coming with killer artwork (and packaging) provided by Kristian Wahlin. (Jeff)

Iced Earth – Something Wicked This Way Comes
Century Media Records
One of the world's most original heavy metal band is back with their sixth and most obscure release to date. Why obscure? Well, with Something Wicked... there seems to be more there than meets the eye. Just under the surface lies a vast array of points unseen at face value, with such a massive body of work one needs several listens to fully grasp it in its entirety. Once again Iced Earth push the metal envelope with the now classic Schaffer/Barlow pair at the forefront that's nothing short of fucking brilliant! This album shows the band accenting on various elements only flirted with in the past. From keys and backup chorus to a now more present use of acoustics down to the somewhat surprising inclusion of flute. After eleven monstrous tracks (including an instrumental – "1776"), the band moves into its epic "Something Wicked" trilogy based on "an ancient Earth culture being overrun by an alien species, Man" to quote the promo, being unraveled in just over twenty minutes. Their trademark identity is still ever present, being undeniably interwoven within this hour-long monumental offering. One would be extremely foolish to deny the awesome heavy metal of Iced Earth. This is a must (as is its predecessors), period! (Jeff)

Impaled Nazarene – Rapture
Osmose Productions
I was a happy lad to see this new CD end up in my mailbox. I have always liked this band since hearing Tol Corupt Norz Norz Norz..., but they particularly grew fond with me with their last full-length album, Latex Cult, because of it's blasting grind/crust feel to it. This album is even faster and more diabolic if that is possible. The vocals are insane, and they seem to be the rallying point for the whole craziness of Impaled Nazarene. I hear that this band is going to play the Milwaukee Metal Fest, but I hope they are able to put together a real tour because the American fans have had to wait long enough. Regardless of whether they'll be playing near you or not, you need to get this album. It's another chapter to that great book called Impaled Nazarene. (Bart)
Incantation – Diabolical Conquest
Relapse Records
Didn't take Incantation long to crank out a full-length for Relapse, and this new release shows some growth for the band. Now don't go thinking they lost any heaviness because that isn't even remotely close to being true. They have found some more dynamics in their song writing though. The blasting death they are known for is still quite prevalent, but now they have dropped in some slower sections in the songs as well. The effect that comes from this is that the blasting parts come across even more violent than before. All the while though, the band does not lose the sound Incantation has developed over the years. The lineup for this album is Kyle Severn on drums, John McEntee on guitars, and Daniel Corchado doing the bass/vocals duties. The production is clear and powerful, while they continue their unusual artwork for their covers. Considering how little this band's earlier material did for me, it's amazing how much I have liked their last couple albums. In my eyes, buying this new album can only be a good thing, so get out there and do it now. (Bart)
Infamy – The Blood Shall Flow
Qabalah Productions
I reviewed the tape version of this album all the way back in #3 of Intellektual Spew 'zine. I even interviewed the band in #4. So the obvious reaction to getting this album on CD can be nothing but positive. The album sounds even better with the clarity that the CD format brings. Josh of Infamy died shortly after the interview I did with him, so the band's future is still up in the air last time I heard. This album does serve as a fine testament to Josh because this is one excellent death metal album. A less technical form of Morbid Angel would be a solid representation for this album. If you haven't picked up a copy of this album yet, then please do so. You won't regret it. (Bart)

Kharadrai – Millennia
Meat Hook Productions
This is some decent ambient material here. The pieces are all musically based, but do have a sinister feel to them that I like a lot. This was the final of four releases by Meat Hook Productions, and it was not the black metal fare that the other three were. It's a refreshing change, and the material here is well worth looking into. Like I said, the songs have a rock foundation and almost have a dance feel to them at times. Comparisons to MZ.412 would work here, but Kharadrai does not have the folkish influence. Of course the Mortiis sound comes to mind as well. It seems to be more futuristic instead. There are some spoken word parts whispered on top of the music as well, but that is it for the vocal lines. Good stuff here that I recommend. (Bart)
Killpatrick Knapp – Lock Down
Sinbad Productions
Killpatrick Knapp is the combined efforts of Ken Killpatrick, who provides vocals and drum programming, and Toby Knapp who does the guitar and bass. Lock Down lies in the realm of traditional heavy metal with an edge of melody that mixes in quite well. There is a slight mechanized or industrial feel to this release due to the use of a drum machine, while at the same time the drums do have an identity of their own and don't end up sounding flat or one dimensional as most programmed drums do. The music on the four song EP is quite catchy and enjoyable with their mixture of melodic heavy metal and hard rock while leaning more towards the heavy side of things. Giving the music more of an identity is the melodic soloing by Knapp, which come off as being catchy and quite memorable. The music is certainly competent, but my only complaint would have to be the style of vocals used. The vocals of Killpatrick are too glam like to fit the music and aren't strong enough to blend with the music properly thus seeming a bit out of place. Other than that point, this is a decent traditional metal duo. (Jeff)
Konkhra – Weed Out the Weak
Metal Blade
Hey everybody, Konkhra wears British Knights!! (What!?!?!) This is my first real time listening to Konkhra, although I've heard parts of their past work beforehand. This is one of those releases that you acknowledge is decent but still can't really come to a solid decision on. I believe this is their past efforts completely reworked (but I could be mistaken) if that tells you anything. This music is solid and no doubt heavy, with somewhat catchy song writing at times reminiscent of a mixture of Machine Head and Pantera (and these type bands). Almost too much so. Lending a hand to the band is axe man James Murphy for this release along with now full time member Chris Kontos formerly of Machine Head. I suppose most of you by now have heard this band's name, but I'm still asking myself if I would recommend this to everyone. Well, one thing's for sure, if you're a fan of the above mentioned bands or styles then this would certainly be a good addition to your collection. I think I could see the American crowd (you know who you are) getting into this. (Jeff)
Kreig – Rise of the Imperial Hordes
Blood, Fire, Death Records
Here we have a band out of New Jersey playing raw and chaotic black metal. Kreig play a style similar to that of old Dark Throne or Dark Medieval Times era Satyricon. I can't say I like this very much either. One of the main things that doesn't sit well with me about this release (besides the music) is the fact that this is on compact disc. This is demo level material and for all we know could be a demo pressed onto CD, which is all too common these days. Anyhow, this disc contains three spoken tracks (which go over well), an outro and seven tracks of raw dirtiness of which track six, "Coronation," shows the most promise with its catchy riffing and appropriate pace. At times, the material appears too fast for its own good, while only hurting the music. One of the more appealing things about Kreig are the vocals, which are done by both members and are wild and chaotic, ranging from all out screams to murderous growls. Simply put, this is yet another all too typical act contributing to the not so grand U.S. scene. (Jeff)



Kvikksølvguttene – Gamlem
Head Not Found
Here's an interesting band I've recently discovered. One of those Head Not Found bands that are so hard to obtain here in the states and are obscure as hell. Right off, a point of interest for some of you would be that this band includes in its ranks Necro Butcher of Mayhem for all you Mayhem freaks. Yet this band does not, whatsoever, resemble Mayhem or any other black metal band for that matter. Why? Because it's insanely unorthodox death metal that's fuckin' great! Quite original death metal that I will further go into with the review of their full-length. See that for more info. The only down point of this release is the running time. It contains three tracks, (one of which appears on the full-length), that clocks in at a very short eight minutes. Eight minutes!! Way too short for even a mini-CD release. This could have and should have been released as a 7" EP instead, to severely cut down on the cost. (Jeff)
Kvikksølvguttene – Krieg
Head Not Found
With Krieg we get a better idea of what Kvikksolvguttene are about and see the expansion of potential displayed on the mini-CD. And just what does this band have to offer? Guttural, flowing, drug induced, murderous death metal of an unorthodox style indeed! This album captures a full sound, picture perfect for the style created, which is topped off with production that adds a slight fuzziness to the overall sound for good effect, yet still remaining intelligible. The music here in is quite fast at times but is a slow to mid-paced as is fast with a current of groove (in a good, headbanging way) detected throughout also. The structure and songwriting is full on, crafted with severe catchiness and solidness in the thick, somewhat fuzzy guitars, while the drums pound out with their distinct pitch, accompanied by a fat, audible bass line. The vocals are also interesting, being almost a gurgling scream or even shout like that is undeniably death metal. All in all a fine release, although quite difficult to find and obscure as hell, while certainly worth tracking down. Even the artwork is cool, which features a guerilla brandishing an assault rifle with a severed hand dangling between his teeth. Suitable for the murder theme lyrics. And just think, I made it through both reviews and didn't mention the band name once! Ha! (Jeff)
Los Gusanos – Los Gusanos
Mayhem Records
I guess the fact that C.J. Ramone is now in this band is supposed to impress me into liking this band. It didn't work. This is a more rocking version of Down By Law. Not even a good version of Down By Law. The vocals have a hint of Ramones mixed in with Down By Law. The sound is good, but I'm tired and not even going to try to give a more lengthy description on this particular CD. It's just not worth the space or time. (Bart)
Lunar Aurora – Seelenfeuer
Voices Productions
When this German horde released its first album, Weltenganger (also on Voices), I remember liking it a bit, but the main down point with that album was that it almost never broke away from the blast beat and this would become quite monotonous after awhile. Well with their second album, the band has shaken that problem and has come up with varying speed to properly fit the riffs this time. That was the main downfall of the debut, the riffs were great, but it was just that the blast didn't always (more often than not) suit the music. Fortunately this has been changed. Their growth in song writing is apparent on Seelenfeuer, mixing their riffs and furious skinkill. Also showing up a bit more than before is the use of acoustics, which work extremely well to aid in getting a dark feel. Of course the blasting is still very much present, only now used and spread out in better fashion allowing the music to breathe, giving the listener a better idea of what's going on. In my opinion the songs could stand to be shortened a bit with the inclusion of a few more tracks. There's not a track on the album that isn't under seven and a half minutes long (excluding the intro), and the longest one runs over fifteen minutes while the album has only six tracks total. German Black metal! (Jeff)
Manegarm – Nordstjarnans Tidsalder
Displeased Records
After a short, somber intro, this young band known as Manegarm begins with a whirlwind of darkness. This is my first encounter with this obscure band from Scandinavia, and while having never heard them before, I was curious as to what to expect. These guys capture that cold Nordic feel laid down by many bands before hand, with their fast, semi-fuzzy guitar work that is quite effective herein. What makes this somewhat the exception is their drum work that changes quite often, incorporating a wide variety of speeds over furious fret work. With changing speeds, Manegarm are able to hold the attention of the listener all the while using a number of other, less traditional instruments such as violin and subtle, underlying synth work along with near folk-like acoustics as well. Along side the main dark vocals are the accompanying female vocals that add a nice touch without becoming typical amidst the howling wolves and frostbitten landscapes. This album also sports an upstanding production to round out the catchiness. A great debut effort... (Jeff)

Master – Faith is in Season
Pavement Records
Speckmann returns with his long running band Master to give it another go at it once again. With a whopping sixteen tracks clocking in at nearly fifty-five minutes this album quickly begins to wear thin. As much as I hate to admit it, the new Master can't touch the old one, as the material here just doesn't grab your attention as before. The tracks come as hit and miss, leaving the listener (at least this one) wondering when it's going to really kick in. The vibe is laid back on Faith is in Season, seeming to gallop at mid-pace more times than not. The classic Speckmann vocal grunt is still present, and the Master sound is overall still there, yet it appears the magic has been lost for the most part, although there are a few tracks that do stick out. Namely "Butchered in Numbers" and "Antidote with Previously Committed." On the whole, this album falls short in capturing a great listen, in turn being a bit unfulfilling. (Jeff)
Mercyful Fate – Dead Again
Metal Blade Records
Like night to a vampire, Mercyful Fate are to heavy metal, and for many the very life blood itself. Having been spawned nearly two decades ago from their mother land of Denmark, this entity known as Mercyful Fate has since continued to thrive, and what a glorious road paved in sacrilegious metal it has been! Dead Again marks these walking icons fourth full-length of this decade (under the Metal Blade banner), and once again, they continue to stun with precise accuracy. This time around marks the departure of long time fret man Michael Denner and welcomes Mike Wead (of Hexen Haus) and his like minded talents. The songwriting duo of crazed frontman King Diamond and axe man Hank Shermann remains (along with drummer Bjarne Holm) to keep that undeniably classic 'Fate atmosphere intact for all it's worth. The speed of since past 'Fate albums takes a backseat with the band focusing on a more guitar oriented, almost groove like, vibe to achieve that eerie touch that they've become oh so skilled in. Although the upbeat pace is at times missed, the trademark catchiness is definitely still there with the occasional skin peeling part. King Diamond brings us some of his best lyric work in quite some time, bringing the sacrilegious focal point to the forefront that's been absent (for the most part) for a while now. Just look to the opening track, "Torture 1629" or the utterly captivating closing track "Crossroads" for a few dark examples. This album features some of the classiest material that 'Fate has done in years, and the title track (coupled with "The Lady Who Cries" and the closing track) is perhaps the greatest example. The song "Dead Again" is a brilliant thirteen and a half minute masterpiece, combining 'Fate of new and old with their new found vitality and class. Skeptics need look no further than mid way through to the ingenious orchestra part, "I hear an orchestra, I see an orchestra, I AM an orchestra." Brilliant!! It is truly amazing how these few individuals have remained such a driving force in the metal scene for so many years and continue to do so. This speaks volumes for their unique brand of heavy metal as well as their interesting personalities. ALL HAIL MERCYFUL FATE!! (Jeff)
A Mind Confused – Anarchos
Near Dark Productions
I have been slightly familiar with this band through their Out of Chaos Spawn 7" and was impressed with their work. This, their first full-length, takes their previous efforts one step further and distances themselves from the current flow of things. The way this band writes its music is downright strange and can leave you wondering just what exactly it is that they have pulled together, which in my book is a plus in itself. Coming from Sweden, this band almost possesses that Swedish Death metal sound and maybe slightly so, but due to the way their music is written it doesn't come out that way and their off kilter use of melody adds yet another touch of "what exactly is this." Keeping the pace mostly within the medium and below areas, they allow their strangeness to seep out for all its worth, setting the stage for many a different mood and stepping up the throttle from time to time just to give you an aggressive slap to show their full potential. Mixing together several prevalent styles to reach a truly odd end result. Original! (Jeff)
Mindrot – Soul
Relapse Records
Right off, I find this to be rather boring, Zzzzzzz...I haven't been too crazy about this band in the past although some of their work was decent, I just can't concentrate on this one. It's basically in the nature of their previous work, being heavily emotional and rather doomy at time yet this one just doesn't seem to have any magic. Their sound seems a little altered, they seem to have made an effort to add an extra edge to their music, which does sound good as far as sound goes, but it lacks body (and "soul"). There's not a lot more I can find appealing about this, maybe they have achieved just what they were to, because this is too dreadful even for me. I think the dude from the Machine Head artwork for The More Things Change decided to show up on Mindrot's Soul, that I did notice (haha). (Jeff)
Monster Voodoo Machine – Direct Reaction Now!
Dr. Dream Records
Imagine a more straight up rocking version of newer Anthrax, and maybe just throw in a splash of blues. There's a good start in describing the sound of Monster Voodoo Machine. The production is another thing that I noticed first off as being very strong. The music just doesn't do much for me though. I don't hate this but I definitely don't like it either. Very bland, and the before you know it the CD is over. Similiar to Monster Magnet musically, but Monster Magnet is the better of the two since some of their songs are at least catchy to a certain degree. This is definitely some of the more commercial music I've reviewed lately, and maybe it could do well on a tour like Ozfest or what not. I just can't find myself giving it my recommendation. (Bart)
Morta Skuld – Surface
Pavement Records
Have heard this band's name in the underground for years, but this is my first taste of them here on their debut release off Pavement Records. The music is just along the lines of what I had heard, and that is brutal death metal. The sound is the first thing I notice about this CD. It's great. Everything is heard clearly and powerfully. Now if only the music was a bit more memorable we'd have a monster here on our hands. The music is well executed, but it is unfortunately death metal by the

KATATONIA
Discouraged Ones

"Sweden's masters of the morose... *Discouraged Ones* is an epic of dismal delight" - Metal Maniacs

"Everybody should hear it" - Terrorizer

OLD MAN'S CHILD
Ill-Natured Spiritual Invasion

The next dark masterpiece from Galder, this time featuring the rhythmic work of drummer Gene Hoglan throughout. Possessing an unorthodox charm, as well as having a mixture of raging black metal and classic guitar riffs, *Ill-Natured...* will leave a lasting impression. KKKK-Kerrang!

EINHERJER
Odin Owns Ye All

Capturing the powerful atmosphere and feeling associated with Norse mythology and combining it with heavy music, EINHERJER is true epic, Viking metal.

SAMAEL
Exodus

A new mini-CD of awe-inspiring darkness from SAMAEL. "Challenging, invigorating and simply majestic" - Terrorizer

STRAPPING YOUNG LAD
No Sleep Till Bedtime

Recorded during last year's Australian tour, *No Sleep Till Bedtime* is a live effort from SYL featuring songs from their two albums, as well as a brand new live song, *"Far Beyond Metal"*, and two bonus studio tracks.

ARCH ENEMY
Stigmata

From full-on death metal to traditional nuances, ARCH ENEMY feature high intensity dueling guitar melodies courtesy of former Carcass guitarist Michael Amott and his younger brother Christopher (Armageddon) to make for a shredder of extreme proportions. *Stigmata* will please listeners of every extreme as it carries its aggression and its musicality equally.

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numbers. No variation from the million other death metal bands that we've all heard. This is pretty damn good for what it is, but it's nothing new and that is what leaves me with the empty feeling after the CD is over. Die hard death metal fans will probably still love this, but for most looking for some originality, you're going to be left hanging. (Bart)

Musta Surma – Demo 1997
Meat Hook Productions
More violent black metal from Meat Hook Productions. Another tape release that's more akin to early Darkthrone this time. The vocals are a quite tortured, and I enjoy them a lot. The riffing does takes on a hint of Celtic Frost, but not to the proportions that Usurper or Scepter do. The production is clearer and stronger, and bodes well for the actual recording since this is just a dub. Four songs are on here, but each is quite lengthy so you're not getting a short release by any means. Of the material that was sent to me from Meat Hook Productions, this is probably the best material they sent me. Well worth checking out for any black metal fan. (Bart)

My Own Victim – The Weapon
Century Media Records
Well Century Media continues their not so distinguished accomplishment of not ever releasing a hardcore CD I have yet to really enjoy. I find this band to be both uninspiring and second rate. There are many bands out there playing better metal, hardcore or punk than this band. The band does primarily stay in the hardcore vein, but does take some from the punk and metal genres as well. Maybe they are better live, but I don't hold out much hope for it really. The only song on this CD that shows any hope for me is "Throw the Next Stone", and it does show some real anger and fury. Things quickly fall back into cloning others though, and I'd rather listen to a leader than a follower. My Own Victim fall in the latter for me. (Bart)

Narnia – Awakening
Nuclear Blast Records
A new traditional metal signing by Staiger and company coming to us in the form of Narnia. This is on of traditional side of things with clean vocals and a feel of older bands like Dokken come to mind while listening. The band is geared towards mainman Carljohan's guitar playing, while lots of guitar solos and an overall guitar based atmosphere. The riffs and songwriting are catchy, and the use of keys adds (at times) a fluffy, happy vibe which brings to mind a few bands from the '80s, offset with the scarce use of acoustics that add a unique touch as well. This has a progressive touch to it, at times reminiscent of Dream Theatre and the like, echoed by the clear, solid production. My only beef with this is that it's outright Christian, with (nearly) each song mentioning something like "Our almighty God" or "Jesus comes to our world with love" which I absolutely despise (guess that explains the happy vibe eh?). For me, it's always been about the music, not the idiotic religious beliefs, that of any kind. Great job guys but wakeup and concentrate more on the musical aspect and less on the fairy tale religious side of things. (Jeff)

!Highly Recommended!

Nile – Amongst the Catacombs of Nephren-Ka
Relapse Records
I was looking forward to this album quite a bit by Nile, but was not expecting such a crushing release. This was the release that was supposed to be out on Visceral Productions, but was picked up by Relapse after Visceral Productions called it a day. Vicious death/grind from South Carolina here, and the whole theme of Nile is Egyptology. The layout and lyrical stance shows the extensive knowledge they have in Egyptology. The music sounds good production wise, as well as totally brutalizes any listener. I have heard this band was stealing some of the shows when they were touring with Incantation, and I don't have a hard time believing it. I want to see these guys live myself now. The album is on the short side with the time length being just over half an hour, but the music on here is simply too good to pass. Get this now because this is one of the best releases we'll see this calendar year. (Bart)

Nasum – Inhale/Exhale
Relapse Records
You know, it seemed there for a while that Relapse Records was going downhill, but with lately releasing such albums by Nile, Incantation, Benümb and now Nasum things are more than on track. Blast grind is what Nasum excels at, and they sport thirty-eight songs on this album to prove how well they can grind. The album length clocks in around forty-five minutes so you can see each song is a short blast of intensity. The lyrics are about self improvement and fixing the wrongs of this messed up world. The layout gives hint at the focus of the lyrical stance as well with the masses of people all in gas masks. This wins out over Benümb because the songs do not blend together as often as they do with Benümb. Great stuff, and it's especially recommended for fans of grind. I can't see it getting much better than this for them. (Bart)

Natron – Hung Drawn & Quartered
Headfucker Records
Raff of Headfucker 'zine has started a label of her own, and if you have read her zine then you know her releases will only consist of death metal. I have heard godly things about this band too, and for the exception of one thing, I like this release a lot as well. The band plays some vicious, well played death metal. The riffs are bouncing off each other, and there is some nice guitar work here without getting too technical or showy for its own good. The vocals are beyond deep and guttural. The bass and drums are solid here in the background. My only gripe about this CD is that the mix is sometimes way off kilter. The second the song starts, it doesn't feel right. I get the feeling they were trying to accentuate the riff that starts off the song, but it just ends up burying everything else. This strange mix is brought up from time to time, but for the most part things are okay. It's just that this occassional bringing up the volume of the guitars just leaves a bad taste in my mouth. The music is killer though, and death metal fans have yet another CD to search out and enjoy. (Bart)

New Mongrels – Big Cup of Empty
Daemon Records
Dear Dameon Records....Please do not send me anymore of your releases....I do a magazine that features extreme music such as metal and some other styles such as punk, gabber, noise, etc....The folky/bluegrass music of your bands such as the New Mongrels does not even come close to our musical coverage....So far, all three CD's you've sent I've given to my girlfriend instead....No offense but this music interests me in no way....Thank you and have a nice life. (Bart)

Nifelheim – Devil's Force
Necropolis Records
Devil's Force is the second offering by Nifelheim released by Necropolis Records. Having never heard the band previously, aside from their appearance on the recent Gummo soundtrack, I didn't have much to go on except their reputation which I completely put aside in reviewing. I wouldn't quite call Nifelheim retro, more like an early, more controlled rawness form of black metal. Each instrument being clearly audible yet the whole overall feel has a raw quality to it. While listening to this for the first time and before reading the bio I thought there were traces of early Morbid Visions era Sepultura within their music, which seems quite true. And to quote the bio, Nifelheim are said to: "this time showcase a strong Brazilian influence." While this is so, the band also shows a strong regard for the early German thrash/power metal scene as well. As the band bangs along, they make good use of firery melodic soloing that adds catchiness. This album I definitely like, which conjures up images of head banging masses hailing all that is metal. Fuck yeah! (Jeff)

Nocturnal Breed – Triumph of the Blasphemer
Hammerheart Records
Nocturnal Breed quickly return with the follow-up to their Aggressor LP with a mini-CD entitled Triumph of the Blasphemer. This CD shows the band picking up where they left off with Aggressor for the speed metal legions are thrashing at it once again. And once again it fucking rules! This time these Norwegian metalheads offer up one original studio track, a cover tune of W.A.S.P.'s "I'm Alive", and three live tracks (one of which comes from their exclusive "Raping Europe" 10" LP that sold out on tour.) recorded on their recent Raping Europe tour with Emperor and Bal-Sagoth. This is a great release to hold the masses over until the next full-length is spit forth. Bang your head and await the speed metal legions!! (Jeff)
Nocturnal Mortum – Goat Horns
The End Records
This is thus far the only release from The End Records I haven't gone ape shit over, and with The End Records releasing new full-lengths from Mental Home, Scholomance and Epoch of Unlight in the somewhat near future it doesn't seem like this will happen often. Now don't go thinking that I hate this release, because that is not the case. There is just not enough here at times to really keep me interested. The title track though is a prime example of what Nocturnal Mortum should push for in the future. The blasting black metal rages below while the raspy vocals belt out above and intertwine with the synths quite nicely. The keyboards add a nice melodic touch to the song that I like a lot. Later on in the song it adds a second melody that is quite catchy and memorable. This however is not always the case with the other songs on this release. The guitar sound is bit buried here behind the drums and synth. I know that this band has recently been picked up for European distribution by Nuclear Blast Records, so you will hear more from this band guaranteed. I'm not sure this is the best album to premiere Nocturnal Mortum with, but it's not a bad start. (Bart)
Obliveon – Whimsical Uproar...
Red Stream
Whimsical Uproar is this band's 1987 demo (that never saw release) pressed onto disc, celebrating ten years of existence in the process. This is compared to the '80s thrash (i.e. Kreator and Sodom) and rightfully so. Although, after repeated listens, I find this not doing much for me. While the riffing has a stranglehold on that thrashing Kreator vibe, my attention still begins to wonder. The production on this one is a little gruff, yet not all that noticeable. While I realize that this is a demo recorded over ten years ago (which probably stood quite well at the time) it just doesn't posses that overall catchiness of the aforementioned bands. The last track on this MCD does catch my attention for a bit, with its series of vicious riffings and erratic breaks. I'm not sure if this band is still together today, but I would be curious to see what they could come up with. While I can't say I'd kill to have this, I think a lot of the old thrashers can and will appreciate this. (Jeff)
October 31 – The Fire Awaits You
R.I.P. Records
Heavy Fuckin' Metal! This is October 31! Forget the term "retro" and all its baggage for King Fowley and his two cohorts Jim Hunter and Brian Williams are here to wow you with their first metallic offering under the October 31 moniker. And fuck is it great! The Fire Awaits You is as metal as it gets, traditional in all its glory. As one could have guessed, this comes as highly original and has few, if any comparisons, instead borrowing the formula from the previous decade and combining it with their natural talents of crafting undeniably killer metal to once again stun us all. King's vocals tread melodic waters in this band, and his penmanship is truly unique, having an underlying theme of horror and such, much in the vein of classic metal lyrics (the title track kills!). Of course, his work behind the kit is ever impressive. The axe work by Williams and low end of Hunter round out things, finding a one of a kind balance with an up and down pace, catchy riff upon catchy riff, killer melodies and memorable leads and a touch of keywork by Mr. Fowley himself to achieve an end result nothing short of the best today's true metal community has to offer. Also, having art work that perfectly captures the feeling of the lyrics. I could go on and on with praise for this band and its debut album and what not, but I'll leave it at this: If you don't own this, you're fucking gay! How does that rub ya? (Jeff)
October 31 – Visions of the End
Along with the Doomstone advance, King also included the advance EP for King's other great band October 31. Having recently just gotten the debut CD of October 31, I was eager to tear into their newly recorded EP Visions of the End. And once again they deliver. With this, their second recording (third counting their demo), October 31 seem to have found their writing style and come across more fluent and relaxed on these five tracks. This EP follows along the lines of their The Fire Awaits You album, while this material has more of a natural feel to it and has the chance to breathe a bit more with the addition of a slightly better sound on this recording as well. Included within these five tracks is an awesome cover of Lizzy Borden's "Give'em the Axe" (Hell yeah!) to make you want to dust off the ol' Borden vinyl. As always, this is nothing but the best that you've come to expect from these Virginian headbangers. No word yet as of when this will be released, or what label it will be out on, so contact King for further information regarding this and his other bands. (Jeff)
Odes of Ecstasy – Embossed Dreams in Four Acts
The End Records
Not being familiar with this band, I was curious to sample their music, as the layout is rather dark with a classy nature about it. The music of Odes of Ecstasy is quite complex, executed in a very artistic manner. Seeming to build upon dark, haunting synth and keywork, they use this as a foundation to structure their compositions, taking the basis of metal and distorting it in such a way as to arrive at an original platform. Their use of unique operatic-like female vocals add to the amazing atmosphere they've created, rivaled by the selective use of a Death styled voice. With a lot going on within their music, they've combined an array of eclectic sounds with acoustics and what not to create a whole world of sinister beauty. These four acts are accompanied by both a prolog and an epilog in which they use samples from Francis Ford Coppola's Dracula (Vampire Hunter – epilogos) to end this thirty some odd minute EP, which comes out strikingly effective. These six individuals comprise an act that is definitely an occupant of the elite dark metal category of uniqueness. All intelligent souls must witness this! (Jeff)
Old Man's Child – Ill-natured Spiritual Invasion
Century Media Records
This is an album I was quite curious to hear, especially after hearing that drum lord Gene Hoglan was to appear as a session member, not to mention being a fan from the early days. To be honest, they came up with quite a good album. Having been left a little jaded after their last effort, The Pagan Prosperity, I was a bit unsure of what to expect with this. It seems as if Galder (leader since day one) has forsaken full-time members and decided to forge on with himself being the sole father of this child, which, if this is any indication, maybe isn't such a bad idea. I've come to see this album as a mixture of the previous two full-lengths, with the all consuming blackness created on Born of the Flickering and the retrogression mindset crafted on The Pagan Prosperity, with a seemingly new found ability of tapping into the well of creativity. The vibe that is brought back from the ...Flickering album is what really sets this album off, along with that new touch previously mentioned. Only seconds into the album, Old Man's Child grab you by the throat to seriously let you know that you're in for just over a half a hours worth of pure fucking aggressive metal, with instant attention getters like "Demonical Possession," "Captives of Humanity" and "My Evil Revelations." And yes, the "black metal" tag has fallen by the wayside leaving only a taste of "metal" in the mouth of the listener for the most part. A killer offering from this Old Norwegian Child, and Hoglan is as brilliant as always, adding a distinct touch to the overall mood and yet another notch to his legendary belt. (Jeff)
Ophthalamia – A Long Journey
Necropolis Records
I've heard about this on and off for quite a while now, and it has finally arrived after who knows how long in the (re)making. Having thought their second LP Via Dolarosa was flawless and melodically killer. While having never heard their first one, I was really looking forward to this. This album is actually their first full-length re-recorded (which was entitled A Journey Into Darkness), and the whole bit with two bonus tracks as well (one of which is a Venom cover). There's not much room for me to compare and contrast here due to my never having heard the original so I'll have to go on what I have heard. This is in the similar style of the Via Dolarosa album, but the majority of the melody isn't there and the song writing doesn't reach out and grab your attention as such (which is partly logical due to this being their first album and me comparing it to their second). While I can't say I was taken as much by this one as by their second, I still recognize the importance herein of their unique melodic blackness that is kept to a medium pace. I'm not sure if "All" will continue with this band, but it would be interesting to see what they could come up with. (Jeff)
Oxiplegatz – Sidereal Journey
Seasons of Mist
Impressive undertaking here. The entire CD is one long song, but it is fortunately broken up in parts so you can easily access any part of the song that you wish to hear. The music has a futuristic feel to it, but still has a metal base to it

all. The entire song tells a story, and the use of scratchy growling vocals along with a female operatic style make up the personas on this release. The music is quite interesting, and it is obviously an original release because the music shifts themes and ideas often. That is also a curse in itself because the music seems to be a bit uneven. The parts don't always blend together that well. Also, the music hits a really spectacular riffing or song structure, but before you know it, the song moves on to something else. The song production is clean, and the album clocks in over forty minutes. This will takes some listens to get into, and it will take some flexibility as well, because while the album as a whole is quite good there are some rough parts here and there. Worth getting the album alone because of it attempt at something quite individualistic and original. (Bart)
Pissed Off Orgasm – Pornonomicon
Be A Freak Records
Imagine a sexually staved maniac who's furious at the whole world. If this was a movie setting, then the project of Pissed Off Orgasm would make for a great background imagery. This is a noise project of sorts. It's filled with porn and hatred for all, but especially for women. The sound is filled with loops of clips from porn and also loops of him screaming out his disgust for the world. I haven't gotten to hear much noise lately so maybe that's why I'm taken to this project, but this is great to listen to when you're hating the world. It makes you realize you're no where near as bad off as the guy behind this project. If a mixture of noise and porn sounds good to you then this definitely is the place for you. (Bart)
Plantabiss – The Color of Foul Thoughts
ETY Records
Quite the schizophrenic release I have here. This band has found a strange mix of techno/industrial and mixed it with grind similiar to Agathocles. You have to hear this to properly visualize it. I encourage bands to try to push the boundaries of originality, and that is why I'm able to overlook some of the rough edges here. The processed vocals are the big one for me. They gotta go. They sound like some weak alien voice and do not help the music at all. The techno side of the musical spectrum does get repetitious at times, but it is interesting on the whole. The band really shines for me when it's grinding away. They can obviously grind with the best. The release is at fifty-two minutes long, and it does seem to drag on at times. I'd rather see the album have some flaws though when the band is trying something new than it's be the same ol' same ol'. Therefore, I do approve of this band. (Bart)
Primordial – A Journey's End
Misanthropy Records
After three very long years (although it seems longer!), Primordial finally return with their second album. Having been anxiously awaiting this release, I must start by saying that I am a bit let down. First off, I will say that this is a great album, yet I can't shake the feeling of not being wholeheartedly satisfied. I know this may sound dense, but it's just there. This album is rather abstract compared to their debut Imrama, which seemed to have more of a solid feeling with what appeared to be a wider selection of tracks. A Journey's End features seven tracks following along the lines of their first album, although this one does come across as sounding somewhat thinner. Vocalist Naihmass once again gives a brilliant delivery, leaning more towards his unique style of clean voice than that of his more harsh greatness. Yet with only seven tracks (in forty-seven minutes), it at times borders on monotony but overall is a very competent, with the acoustic moments becoming the highlights (for the most part) while that of the clean voice excels. Take a gander for yourself. As for me, I still find Imram to be much more fulfilling. (Jeff)
Pro-Pain – Best of Pro-Pain
High Gain Records/Raw Head Inc.
I got this from Fierce/Mayhem Records even though they weren't listed on this CD. Seems kind of bad timing to release this "best of" compilation since the band really just released a new full-length. The CD contains tracks from their first three album, Foul Taste of Freedom, The Truth Hurts, and Contents Under Pressure. Also, added is an unreleased track and three live songs. I can't really see getting this unless you're new to the band, or just have to have the extra tracks. This band never really has done it for me so I couldn't see myself spending money for it. I guess this falls in that category of "for fans only". (Bart)

Pungent Stench – Praise the Names of the Musical Assassins
Nuclear Blast
I can't think of a more appropriate title for this final release of Pungent Stench. This isn't new material, but more of a testament to just how great the band and how much it has grown over the years. It features material off hard to find 7"s, EP's and demos. The blasting grind death of Pungent Stench slowly mutates into some damn catchy music after a bit, and this was evident on their full-lengths as we all know. The music on this CD is almost 70 minutes worth so this is a definite must for all Pungent Stench fans. I seriously think this could get newcomers to the band to become permanent fans as well. The only gripe I have with this album is the lack of real documentation. All you know are which songs came from what releases and some tracks aren't even mentioned as to where the fuck they came from. Don't let that stop you though because this is a must for fans of this sick legendary band. (Bart)
Ruination – Visionary Breed
Goldtrack Records
Lithuania's Ruination bring to us their debut album of finely produced (courtesy of Tagtgren and Abyss Studios) heavy doom death. This band relies on heavy rhythms and sharp melodies along with rich blending synthesizers next to its clean and deep vocals to achieve its outcome of somewhat complex melodic tinged emotional doom. I like the style this band is going for (and execute), but half way through I just begin to get preoccupied with other things. Perhaps if they had decided to speed things up here and there (as the pace is kept slow throughout) or mix in something to grab the listeners attention and pull their focus back in, but as it goes everything just begins to blend together into one big block of unmemorable melodic doom death. A little more experimentation out of its field would have been very useful here. With this, things could liven up, but as for now I can't say I've been whole heartedly impressed. Somewhat but not wholly. (Jeff)
Sacred Steel – Reborn in Steel
Metal Blade Records
"Metal reigns supreme!" bellows Gerrit P. Mutz, vocalist (or "Sirens of Metal" as the booklet puts it) of German born power/heavy metal outfit Sacred Steel. That my friends says it all. Holding traditional high, Reborn in Steel, is ten tracks of pure metal with headbanging spirit. Solid, galloping rhythms provide the basis of this victory, sporting a crystal clear production. With an apparent focus on metal, battle and all things related, the vocals are executed with force, being grimly melodic. This album possesses a catchiness that is achieved by a somewhat simple approach at writing coupled with a unique vocal delivery. So if you're proud to be a metalhead then get out your gauntlets and prepare yourself for Sacred Steel proclaims; Metal Reigns Supreme! (Jeff)
Sadistic Torment – Unearthly Horrors
Wild Rags Records
This CD release by Wild Rags Records seems to contain two separate recordings by this Maryland band. The first batch of songs sport the newer material, and I find a version of Cannibal Corpse with more blast throughout the songs. The second half sounds more like Suffocation to me. Neither batch of songs is going to win any originality awards, but they do a decent job at what they do. I prefer the mix they have on the older songs. The sound is fuller, while the newer songs have a mix that is too clean with a snare that annoys me. Don't get me wrong though, there are some flashes of coolness here and there. They find a riff here and there that should stir up some trouble in any pit. I cannot recommend this album though on those infrequent splashes of wickedness though. For death metal fans who can't wait but add another death metal album to their collection. (Bart)

SAMAEL

Samael – Exodus
Century Media Records
Well, this mainstay for Century Media is back with an EP to hold us over until their next full-length opus. The material here is very similar to material on Passage. The drums are still programmed yet very realistic. The production is excellent, and you can tell from the second you put it in, that it's Samael. The riffing and fills added here and there make this a bit more intricate than I remember Passage being though. There are seven song on here, and four are originals. The third song, "Son of Earth" is going to lose some fans who hate

experimental and sometimes noisy cuts of the comp. Beginning disc two with a bang is label main main/owner/sicko/family man and his noise ridden industrial entity Bright Death Now. From there on, other memorable artists include the black industrial M.Z.412 along with yet another alter ego of Mortiis that is Cintecele Diavolui. By all means, this is an awesome collection of nothing but professional artists portraying dark beauty and grim feelings of which we can all identify with. If you've been the least bit interested in this area of dark music then you should stop at nothing to obtain this one and to top it all off, it comes at a great price! (Jeff)

Various Artists – Ball One/Strike One
Sinbad Productions

David La Duke & Company at Ball Buster/Sinbad Productions brings us the first installment of their Ball One Compilation series that compiles many styles of hard music. Having read and really enjoyed their magazine Ball Buster before, I was really looking forward to checking this out. David La Duke himself with his self-titled band gets things off to a rockin' good start. From there on there are hit and miss tracks from various bands (twenty-two to be exact) that are memorable and not so memorable at other times. Isolation Chamber provides the first heavy track with their semi-progressive Machine Head like instrumental. Next Hill Jack and Foxx Gang provide their rockish brand of music that were both quite decent. Keegan is next to impress with a strange progressive like style of heaviness followed by Mystic Force, who have to be the most impressive band on the compilation with their blend of progressive like power metal. Hanover Fist also offer up a listenable track of rocky heavy metal. Other featured bands include: Red Bard, Naro, Yardbirds Experience, Compression, Birds of Prey, Lord Litter, Loud Shine, Carl Dixon, Shadow Play, Yam Cat, Count Viglione and Karen Kennedy. All of which were generally of a rock nature that didn't appeal to me or catch my attention very much. I think their next comp, Ball One, Strike Two, will have a lot more metal oriented bands on it that I'm certainly looking forward to. Overall a great attempt at diversity that goes side by side with their killer magazine. (Jeff)

Various Artists – Blackened Volume 3
Metal Blade Records

The infamous Blackened black metal compilation has been released, this time in its third volume containing two discs as the past two volumes have. Once again I say, as I have said about numerous other compilations, that this is a great comp for what it is, but those familiar with the scene would have likely heard this material before. All tracks are taken from the bands' most current (or so) releases (although on this volume there are a few forth coming tracks from the Blackened label). With this, you get twenty-two bands in twenty-four tracks, all of which are of good quality, ranging from Emperor to Usurper to In the Woods, and again a track from the De Mysteris album of Mayhem (if they keep releasing tracks from this album on each comp, they're going to have released the whole damn album!) As usual the layout is minimal, containing the info of each title's album. Next time there should be more concentration on contents rather than just seeing how many black metal bands you can lump onto a compilation. Make this a comp to stand out with exclusive tracks and what not rather than just fitting in. (Jeff)

Various Artists – A Call to Irons (A Tribute to Iron Maiden)
Dwell Records

Here we have the tribute to Iron Maiden put out by Dwell Records, which I've been looking forward to for a long while now. While tribute albums have risen in popularity throughout the underground in the recent past, and continue to pop up, most fall short in conveying a sense of quality and conviction, A Call to Irons being an exception. A Call to Irons (along with the Mercyful Fate tribute put out by Listenable Records) is quite possibly the best tribute album I have seen yet. The eleven bands that perform on this comp give convincing tributes, doing each song their own way, full of class and uniqueness. Each band puts their own spin on each Maiden track, molding it to fit their style while capturing part of that uniqueness that Maiden so awesomely performs the originals with. Steel Prophet kicks the disc off with "Ides of March/Purgatory", followed by Vital Remain's guttural version of "The Trooper", while Angelcorpse give us the first real highlight of the disc doing the short but sweet "Gengis Kahn." Next, Solitude Aeturnus pull off an impressive version of "Hallowed By Thy Name", the tributes second highlight. After this, New Eden snake their way through out to do "Remember Tomorrow." Then we come to the only track on this album that I didn't care for which was Morgion's version of "To Tame a Land." I felt they over dramatized it, making it way too depressing and out of character. Evoken take over next with a decent version of "Strange World" followed by what has to be the most unique attempt of the tribute, executed by Opera IX, doing the epic "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," putting quite a dark touch to it. And finally, Absu close out this killer compilation with their speedy version of "Transylvania," which is the fourth and final highlight of the disc. For a tribute of such caliber, I felt that a booklet of equal excellence was needed, but is for the most part overlooked once the play button has been pushed. It's really a shame that Bethlehem's version of "Where Eagles Dare" couldn't be included on this comp, which it was supposed to be but was really out of the hands of everyone I suppose. Anyhow, this is a stellar compilation that strives to give honest tribute to one of the world's all time greats of heavy metal and all bands should be applauded for attempting such an undertaking. All hail Iron Maiden!!! (Jeff)

Various Artists – Call On the Dark 2
Nuclear Blast Records

I sometimes question the motives behind all these compilations. I sometimes wonder if any thought is put into them. This is a goth metal compilations of sorts that does not limit the bands just to Nuclear Blast acts fortunately. The CD starts off with a classical piece by Mundanus Imperium that is well done. Next up is Autumn who sound like a more gothic form of the Gathering. Afterwards is London After Midnight who's initial likeness to Marilyn Manson didn't go over well with me. The band shifts gears to a soft techno based goth song that isn't that bad but not that great either. Up next is Type O Negative who fit in perfectly with the dark gothic sound many of these bands portray. Finally Therion get up and perform a track of theirs which, while not new, is easily one of the better tracks with its heavy classical sound and rich choir vocals. Moonspell follows with the single "Sacred," and I still can't stand their new Depeche Mode direction. Left Hand Solution slows things down some with some dark doom, but the band still leaves me uninspired. Evereve is another bright spot on this compilation with a track from their new album Stormbirds. Their brand of heavy gothic metal just oozes of conviction and emotion. Lacimosa follows up with it's techno brand of rock. The song does get old after a while. Some more variation or aggressive vocals, and I could really get into this band though. Switchblade Symphony are up next with something interesting. I'm not crazy about this band, but it seems to have found a cool mixture of heaviness and delicate female vocals that is all wrapped up in a techno based song. Who's next? Oh yes, Live Like Blood who want to be Type O Negative, skip that track purely of the basis of a lack of an attempt at any originality. Next is The Gathering with a single called "When the Sun Hits." They are still doomish vocals with incredible female vocals. They haven't gone back to the heaviness that I enjoyed on Mandylion, but it's okay none the less. Tiamat is up next, and while I've lost interest in this band lately, they do come out more original and interesting than most of the bands on this CD. They are trying to push the boundaries while others are content to sit where they are. Dreams of Sanity crank out a mixture of power metal and gothic influence with female vocals on top of it. This is the one band on this compilation I hadn't heard from before that made me actually want to hear more. Next is Clan of Xymox. Their strange name doesn't save them for me though. Depeche Mode and Cure they want to be. Final track is by Christian Youth who's song at the end makes for a solid ending. It's heavy, dark and foreboding. Fans of gothic or dark techno will want to check this out if you've not heard many of these bands. I can't see a dire need for this compilation on a whole though, but I guess it serves its purpose though of letting you hear many bands at one decent price. (Bart)

Various Artists – Five Years of Necropolis Records
Necropolis Records

This one compilation CD shows why Necropolis is one of my favorite labels in the underground. Nineteen tracks are here, and each band is an individual act, but all stay true to that evil horde that Necropolis is based upon. First band up is the mighty Dawn with their black metal attack that has a light dose of Swedish death thrown in as well. Second up is Guillotine with their old style of Kreator/Destruction worship. The only gripe I have with this album is that nearly every band has already released the material elsewhere that appears on this compilation. This applies for the tracks that are played by: Nifelheim, The Ancient's Rebirth, Demonic, Ophthalamia, Dissection, War, Cranium, Deathwitch, Tartaros, Usurper, Arckanum, Satanic Slaughter, Niden Div. 187, Ashes and Vondur. Most are very good tracks that are very representative of each band's material. The unreleased material will be out soon, so you get a taste of the Witchery who play a mix black and retro to come up with my favorite track on the album because it is something new I haven't heard yet. Sadistic Intent also have a track on here that is a bit of a breather from all

of the blackened music on here. It is more violent death metal, and this band shows the potential to be huge when their full-length sees the light of day through Necropolis. If you already have a majority of this label's releases, then you might want to pass. Otherwise, this is a great start to see what the big fuss is about Necropolis Records. (Bart)

Various Artists – In Conspiracy With Satan, A Tribute to Bathory
Hell Spawn/No Fashion Records

The ultimate Bathory tribute that's been in the works for a few years now has finally been released, and the wait has been well worth it. Thirteen bands pull off fifteen Bathory classics, all of which are from the first four albums, and all of which are pulled off with convincing authority. The first band to really give this comp its first highlight is Emperor who do "A Fine Day to Die" and give it their own identity while arguably doing the original a bit of justice. The other two outstanding tracks come back to back to close out the disc with Satyricon doing "Born For Burning" (Yes!!) and War covering "War." This is only the third comp that I have found (the other two being the French 'Fate and American 'Maiden tributes) that actually pays "tribute" to a band rather than just having a bunch of bands copy the originals (although the Metallica and Slayer tributes were no slouches either). In Conspiracy With Satan is a tribute in the true sense of the word, complete with a bio of Bathory throughout the first four influential albums and a twenty page booklet featuring quotes and comments along with photos from each of the bands. (The Nifelheim quote is quite humorous which bluntly says..."Fuck off!!"). This all comes packaged in a sleek digi-pack. The other ten bands include: Marduk (twice), Ophthalamia, Gehennah, Dark Funeral (twice), Lord Belial, The Abyss, Nifelheim, Necrophobic, Sacramentum and the Unanimated. All Bathory diehards must own this, it's just THAT SIMPLE!! (Jeff)

Various Artists – Upon a Dark Horizon Underground Comp. Vol. I
Dark Horizon Records

This is the first release for the up 'n coming new label of Dark Horizon. And what a great release it is. This comp showcases thirteen of the underground's more obscure bands of today, minus a few who are already somewhat established such as the awesome dark power of Aeturnus and the beer chuggin' retroness of Nocturnal Breed along with the eclectic Primordial (although I'm not really sure why Primordial was chosen as this track is well over three years old). The coolest thing about this comp is that it features some relatively obscure bands of which even I'm not familiar with. This comp not only offers blackened metal, but also death as well, which is always a good sign in my book. Anyhow, I can' t say that there's a bad band on here, some maybe less appealing than others, but on the whole this is consistent in that it has something to offer all the way around. And they couldn't have picked a better track to start off with than the Sorhin track, brilliant! Other highlights include Bethel, Wallachia and Legion among others. Completing the track listing is as follows: Thy Darkest Empire, Nagelfar (Ger.), Hordes of the Lunar Eclipse, Mundanus Imperium, Vomitory and Hellwitch. A great comp that could introduce even the experienced listener to a few new things. Check it out! (Jeff)

Vondur – The Galactic Rock n' Roll Empire
Necropolis Records

I have to give it to It and All. They do what they want, and don't give a damn to what is considered cool in the scene. How many black metal bands do you know of that would not only cover Motley Crue, but have a picture of Crue members with their faces in place of the real Crue members' faces? That is what is on the cover, and I think it's classic. The music is just as fucked up as the cover, and I fucking dig it. I saw many who hated the first album Stridsyfirlysing, but I was one who loved the blasting black metal with a touch of punkish attitude with it. This album is no different musically except this is only an EP, and it features three covers. They play their version of "Rocka Rolla" by Judas Priest, "Red Hot" by Motley Crue, and finally they do a fucked version of Elvis's "Love Me Tender" with their own modification of lyrics. Seven songs are here, and every single one is great. This is one of It's last pieces of work before he left the scene suddenly, so get this now. (Bart)

Voodoo Glow Skulls – The Band Geek Mafia
Epitaph Records

Was really happy to get a copy of this because I've been a fan of them since their debut CD Who Is This Is? They have been practically the only ska band that I could handle after more than one or two songs. This new CD wasn't as initially gratifying as I would have liked, but after a few spins I could see myself liking this CD quite a bit as well. They have taken off a bit of the speed they've had in the past, but the music is still quite enjoyable. A mixture of ska with a light touch of hardcore would be the make up of Voodoo Glow Skulls. The horn section seems to be a more vital part of the band these days, and they are playing some pretty complex parts as well. In other words, they are there more than just to spice things up which is the feeling I get with some "ska" bands. Funny lyrics as always are included. I've seen this band live a couple times in the past, and this material should help continue their great live show. Check it out. (Bart)

Waltari – Big Bang
EMI/Spin Records

This is some type of techno, heavy, semi-industrial music, and it's terrible! Take the techno vibe of that Mortal Combat music, add some heavy guitars, throw in some really annoying computer keyboard work and put some horribly gay vocals and presto! You get Waltari! This disc gets worse as it goes on, I guess it's just having to endure so much though. One more minute of this, and I think I'll go for the big bang and kill myself (haha). The strangest thing about this disc is that there are two tracks that are totally different and really don't fit on there at all. One sounds like Machine Head (kinda), and one sounds almost grindish. Go figure... No really though, this just isn't my cup of tea at all. This belongs in a whole other scene. (Jeff)

War Horse – War Horse
Burden of Being Records

This is rather different. War Horse play "psychedelic doom-crust" according to their promo which is relatively accurate. They play up the doom vibe entirely, an out of the way type of doom in the fashion of Saint Vitus and the like. Slow, yet active work with interchanging riffs that keep things moving along, having a solid, whole sound with an overall effectiveness. The vocals come as clear and clean from vocalist/guitarist Krista Van Guilder who heads this three piece, giving to the music a desolate touch. With the last of the five tracks in forty-five minutes, War Horse speeds things up to liven up the album and end on a highlight, only to surprise and go into a hidden track to finish out the disc. War Horse have done their job and done it well. (Jeff)

Warhammer – The Winter of Our Discontent
Voices Productions

Until receiving this I had never heard of this band, but one thing is for sure, once you push play even before looking at the promo sheet you realize what this band is all about. And just what is that? One thing and one thing only...to worship Hellhammer! This band sounds like Hellhammer never missed a beat, right down to the very production! Not only is the style down right uncanny, but it's almost as if this were the Hellhammer, artwork and all. This sounds as if it could almost be lost Hellhammer recordings, now wouldn't that be awesome! Anyhow, this band Warhammer does a fine job at recreating that feel from oh so long ago although I can't imagine why someone would want to do a thing like that to this extent. I guess it just comes down to worshipping a band that much. A very good (and dirty) listen, especially if you're into Hellhammer! (Jeff)

Zebrahead – Zebrahead
Doctor Dream Records

I am one who likes some of what Korn has done on their two first albums. I do not however like bands that purely copy them and do nothing in the way of inventive or original. Coal Chamber is one band like this, and now you can add Zebrahead to that undistinguished group. No thanks. (Bart)

Damaged was still very active in the underground just prior to starting my own zine, but it wasn't until they released Token Remedies Research, that I was able to check out their music. It is simply some of the most violent, angry, heavy shit I've heard in a long while. There hasn't been much coverage of this band unfortunately, but do not let that deter you from hearing this band. Read this interview, then search out their album immediately... (Bart)

Having been in the underground for a quite a while, I must admit to only hearing about this great Australian band named Damaged, but then I heard they broke up so I never pursued those early releases. When I got my grubby hands on your release, Token Remedies Research, I was totally blown away by it. Can you go over the band's past up to this album, especially covering the temporary break up and such?

Damaged history goes back to mid '89 when the band formed in a town called Ballarat. There were virtually no metal bands or any scene for metal so the band moved to Melbourne in 1992. A demo release, The Art of Destroying Life, gained some much needed attention, in 1993, the debut album Do Not Spit was released and some international supports included Fear Factory and Bolt Thrower followed. Damaged toured Australia gaining a stronger following and spreading the "Hatecore" to as many places as possible.

In '95, the Passive Backseat Demon Engines EP was released and featured a Bathory cover and a fucked up back-masked remix track. Damaged supported Cannibal Corpse at four of their eight tour dates, and carnage reigned supreme. Mid '95, a new vocalist, Chris, was brought to the fold. Early '96, Damaged did the Morbid Angel support of a few of their shows. Then a few things fucked up. Chris couldn't handle the heavy duty vocals and left, just prior to Fear Factory touring again in which we had scored supports for. Our old singer rejoined the band for which was going to be our final gigs in June 1996.

Around this time, Rotten Records got in touch with us. The band practically didn't exist for around eight months. I fucked off and sold my drums and didn't play for the entire period. Rotten remained interested, so we decided we would be fools not to do it.

Early 1997, the band started writing Token Remedies Research minus guitarist Matt, due to particular habits interfering. In July '97, Spike Cassidy (D.R.I.) came to Australia, and we recorded the album in three weeks. In September '97, we played our first gigs back to a massive response, our Melbourne headlining gig got 700 punters!! We toured Australia successfully in November 1997. In January 1998, Entombed and Damaged did a national tour which was extremely successful. In March and April came another Oz tour in which we kicked out singer Jaymi due to his personal problems.

Are any of the previous releases still available, and where could a yank such as I get my hands on them? How do you think they compare to Token...?

Yes, these releases, Do Not Spit and the EP Passive Backseat Demon Engines are available in the states on import through Shock Records (New World Records). They may be a touch hard to find though.

I think that Token Remedies Research is a big progression musically as we have become more brutal through the fact that we're pissed off about a lot of things, which is why we play such aggressive music. Our EP is a bit disappointing. The production is messy. The engineer fucked it up big time. Not one of our proudest moments.

I think bands such as yourself and Pyrexia have found a way to harness an incredible amount of anger that is missing with many metal bands these days. Many bands are aggressive, but it's just part of the music, and it's not a vital part of the band. Your band demands the listener's full attention or is torn to shreds. Do you agree that many bands lack this true anger, and what does Damaged do differently?

I totally agree that many bands have missed the point. So many bands sound manufactured. Technology has also taken a lot of the human element out of metal. Playing this music requires a big percentage of psychotic adrenaline. No one wants to see an aggressive band stand on stage and look like a bunch of pussies. As soon as we're on stage, it's 1000% brutality. No excuses, all extremity.

I've seen this asked of other Australian bands before, but I'd like to hear your take on it. The bands from Australia seem more chaotic than bands outside Australia. First, do you agree with this, and secondly, why or why not?

Australia has some fucking excellent bands, if only the rest of the world could hear them. I believe Australia has some of the brutalist shit you can get. Being in Australia means it takes so much more to get recognized, so I think the heavier, sicker or whatever, hopefully some one will take notice!

How long after getting back together was the music for Token... written, and how long was it before Damaged was signed to Rotten Records? Do you still get letters, besides mine, that are shocked to hear the band is still together and going strong?

Token... took around six months to write. Some of the songs had been written before we split. We re-wrote a lot of the stuff to suit the way we were writing.

I think a lot of people are shocked that we continue to survive. Particularly when extreme metal exists in a fucking world full of commercialism and sell outs.

What do you think of the job that Rotten Records has done so far for your album. I have to admit to not seeing much promotion for it, and I hate to see an excellent band go by unnoticed because the label either doesn't bother to promo it or because they just can't afford to. Have you heard any complaints about this from anyone else?

Rotten have done a fair amount of promo, I guess though, America is a fucking huge place to start. Think about promoting a band from Australia with not many people knowing about what the fuck's going on. A lot of the promotion we also do ourselves, through zines like yours. I haven't heard any complaints so far.

I would guess that live Damaged shows are a sight to see. Having talked to quite a few Australian metal fans, I know the band is quite popular down there. How are the live shows, and what one aspect do you think you could still improve on for the live set?

Damaged have been one of the fortunate bands to be able to attract a healthy size crowd to a gig. Anything up to 700 people. The live shows include full crowd participation. A lot of fucking energy and a few injuries.

One thing we would like to improve on is probably becoming more professional – less fucking around. Apart from that, it's the music that counts, and we have that part complete.

The cover for the album was quite unusual. What do you think it represents, and why did the band decide on that for a cover?

The cover is pretty bizarre. It was put together by the band. To me it represents...a) the head is humanity in one, tied and bound by the shit that we hate and it's sitting in a drain ready to be disposed of...b) basically the world going down the fucking sewer – haha!! The other photos were shit that looked cool, everyone has a different perception of what it means.

I've pulled out some songs and gone over their lyrics, and I'd like for you to comment on the overall idea of the "message" you're trying to get across with the lyrics. Some have some questions to go along with them as well...

The lyrics are all the work of our dysfunctional ex-singer. Paranoid, drug induced bullshit really. It's hard for me to comment on what the lyrics are really trying to point out, but the way I see it is that he (Jaymi) feels as though he's been hard done. A poor little pathetic victim of life. There's a lot of angry shit written on Token... not all very clear to me.

(Ed. Note – Since he didn't write the lyrics he only commented on a two because they had questions with them so those are the only two I listed here with the interview)

"Token Remedies Research" – Do you think that pharmaceutical companies are avoiding finding a real solution to the disease and just maintaining their lucrative jobs?

Pharmaceutical companies practically cause half the ills in the world; yes it is true they are protecting an extremely lucrative business. The rich get richer, and the sick get sicker.

"Cold Blood Eraser" – Do you think that life now has been reduced to nothing more than the using of others just to exist?

Life is basically parasitic. Everyone gets used and nearly everyone uses others to get what they want. Without this basic thing where would we be? If no one needed anyone else for anything it would be weird. So yes.

I have visited Australia for a week, and personally loved it. Great beer (nectar of the gods!!!), friendly people, and metal fans that listen to more than just Cannibal Corpse and Six Feet Under. What do you think are the good and bad parts of Australia? Have any of the band members been to the states? What is your general perception of the U.S.?

Australia is fucking excellent. Beer here is the nectar of the gods, the bands are cool, such as Blood Duster, Alchemist, Abramelin, Earth, Sakkuth and many others. Weather here is ok, summer is too hot though, very fuckin' hot, winter is great. Crime here is not as bad as other countries.

Australia tends to be more relaxed. The politicians here suck, too many fuckin' fascists (Pauline Hanson needs her fuckin head impaled on a stake!) and our prime-minister, John Howard is nothing but a moron dwarf leper with his head up his arse. Apart from that, our cities are pretty cool and life is pretty cool.

None of us have been to the states, but we are hanging out man!! America is in perception seems to be a fucking full on, scary fuckin' place. It seems to be distorted by the fact that we get to see so much American shit TV shows like: Baywatch, Mad About You, Beverly Hills 90210, Ricki Lake, Oprah...they all must die. But anyway, I look forward to coming and seeing America. I do like movies like Deliverance though!!

What kinds of music find its way into your player? I would assume from the band's sound that you listen to some hardcore as well is that true? What are some albums that you think every music fan should own?

Well, we all listen to different shit, but I listen to a wide range of metal. Extreme black metal...Immortal, Mayhem, Blasphemy, Beherit, etc. Old school metal: Celtic Frost, Metallica (old), Venom, Slayer, Destruction, Sodom, King Diamond, Mercyful Fate and Bathory. Death metal such as: Morbid Angel, Sadistic Intent, Deicide, Malevolent Creation, old Entombed, Grave, Imprecation, and everyone heavy, evil and sick.

I don't listen, play or own any hardcore at all, but there strangely is that sound somewhere in it.

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Crook'd Records

Every metalhead should own these albums of course: Slayer's Reign in Blood, Morbid Angel's Altars of Madness, Bathory's Under the Sign of the Black Mark, and Dismember's Like an Ever Flowing Stream.

What has the band got lined up for the near future? Any chance of going to Europe or possibly the U.S. for some live shows? When are we looking at another album being released for Damaged?

The band is currently writing a brutal, destructive, new album. Due to record about August of this year. So prepare for the carnage my brutal friends.

Your band released one killer album, and I feel honored to feature your band in these pages. Any last thoughts to wrap this interview up?

Bart, thank you very much for the giving a fuck – it's people like you that we are fortunate enough to know. Thanx for the interview and thanx to all support from those who gave a fuck. Aussie metal rules!! Stay Brutal Sick Puppies!!

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DEADEN

If you've been in the underground for a while, and you love death metal then you know of this band or at least have heard of them. Deaden is one of the harder working bands in the underground, and it shows when the band plays live. They are simply devastating live, and they had stiff competition at the Illnoize fest where I saw them. Von set up the entire fest by himself, and it ran like clockwork. This interview isn't the most detailed because we both had been through a very long day of bands and also because I wasn't as prepared as I would have liked to have been. Regardless of this, it's very simple with Deaden. If you are a death metal fan you must get their CD. It is a fine slab of violence. Von took the time after the fest before he started cleaning up to do this interview. We sat down in front of the venue and got down to the business of the interview... (Bart)

Alright, I first off want to say that the Illnoize fest went off great man.

Thanks.

How long has Deaden been around?

Deaden has been around since '92. It basically started with Ethan on drums and Drew on guitars from high school. We all went to high school together so we knew each other from back then. They got started, and they got Danny. I was in another band at the time. Things weren't working out in my band, so I joined Deaden in '95. We've been going strong since.

How many demos were there before the CD?

There was the two song demo that they did when they first started. Then they did another demo that had six songs with their other guitarist that was never released because it was real bad quality. When I joined, we put out a two song demo to let people know that we were out in the underground. Then we did the '96 demo, Feast on the Flesh of the Dead, and it had six songs. And now in '97 we released the CD Hymns of the Sick so that's where we're at now.

Did you release that CD yourself or did you have some help. I thought you did it solo, but now I've heard you're getting a label to help you now.

We did the first pressing of 1,000, actually it came out to about 1,050, and we did that ourselves. Then Rich from Fleshgrind started his own label called United Guttural, and he's releasing it through his label now.

How many has he pressed as of right now?

He did a thousand, and now we're looking at doing another thousand sometime soon. We've gone through almost 2,000 in about eight months.

How often do you guys play shows?

We're playing five this month. We did thirteen in March so we do quite a bit. It just depends on the month. We took last month off because we're working on new material. Usually we do at least two or three gigs a month.

Is it tough getting off from work for all those gigs?

No, it's not that bad really.

Are some of you guys still in school or are all of you working?

Ethan is in school now, but he's the only one. Our jobs are usually okay with it. We know way in advance as well so we can get it arranged.

What are some of the bands you've liked playing with here in the scene?

One of our best buds that we play with a lot have to be Mortal Decay. We played with those guys so many times, and they're just great guys. We've never had a band we've hated playing with though. There are other bands we play with all the time like CorpseVomit. The guys in Disfigured from New York we like playing with as well. (Von then gets asked if he knew where Brice (CorpseVomit) was at.) No but I was just talking about him. (Laughing)

I saw him out back laying in the grass not long ago. He was pretty fucked up. (Laughing) Alright man...go on...

We love to play with anyone man, I don't care. We'd play with Janet Jackson even.

You guys play much here locally?

Yeah, we always try to do at least one show a month, but now we've been backing down to about once every two months.

Where have you played besides here?

We have played eleven states total. Which would be: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, New York, Connecticut, North and South Carolina..umm...oh and Ohio (by this editor's counting that's only ten, but give the guy a break...he just made it through a whole fest he arranged and ran).

Was it any kind of tour?

Yeah, we have done two tours. We put them together and did the second one with Mortal Decay. The first one we pretty did on our own.

Okay, when can we expect some new material?

Well, we are working on new material now. We have three songs completely done. We played one tonight in fact. We've got five that are in the works. We kinda write like a bunch of songs all at once, and eventually they all get done. Lately we've just been so busy it's hard to get finished. We are doing a shitload of shows up through September, then we are taking the rest of the year off to finish writing and such. We've been talking to labels to see what's going to happen about recording.

You going to mention any label names right now?

No, we're going to leave that alone for right now. I don't want to hex us. We're going to see what happens, and hopefully it'll be out at the beginning of '99.

I've noticed that you're the one that mainly seems to do all the mail. Is that correct?

I do pretty much most of the mail. Drew does a few letters. He doesn't get too involved with it. He does a lot of the email along with Ethan.

It tough keeping up with all the mail?

I'm so behind right now. One thing that does it is doing this fest. It takes away a lot of my spare time.

Alright, about this fest. This is your second year. How did you get this place for the fest? (It's the Knights of Columbus (a Catholic club) meeting hall)

Basically I just came to these guys with the idea that I wanted to do it. They were cool with it, and said they would give it a try.

Did you have any problems keeping bands or getting it all set up?

This year I had a few more problems with the band canceling compared to last year. It's not really hard to do though. It happens about eight months in advance.

(We get involved in talking about how crazy Brice was at the fest, but eventually get back to the interview.) That's enough man. Anything you want to say to wrap this interview up?

I would definitely say that new Deaden material will be out no earlier than early '99. Everyone write because we are getting a new batch of shirts in next week because we sold out tonight. Thanks a lot and we appreciate it.

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INCANTATION

This is one death metal band that I had always liked, but it was not until they released Forsaken Mourning of Angelic Anguish and Diabolical Conquest that I had really gotten into them. The band has been around in one form or another for a lot longer than other bands, and even with their label problems they have continued on. If you don't know who Incantation is and call yourself a death metal fan then I pity you. I sent these questions to John, and he got them back to me via email. This interview is a bit dated because it was done shortly after they had recorded Diabolical Conquest, but this band crushes and it's simple as that. Read on... (Bart)

Many people could not believe that you guys went back to Relapse. What brought about the split with Relapse and then the subsequent rejoining with them?

Dude, I'm so sick of answering that question! But, after all that slagging we did on Relapse It's rightfully so that people ask this! Anyway, the bottom line is that they didn't believe in Incantation, but they would not drop us for a long time! Once they dropped us it was under conditions. When we did the Forsaken Mourning of Angelic Anguish MCD for Repulse, Relapse decided that we were still good! So they found a contractual way to release the MCD! So after the MCD got released in the U.S. and started to sell real well, Relapse decided to put out our third album, because we are still under contract with them because of the problem with the release forms! It's all fucked up! Things are working out way better with them then a few years ago!

Just what happened with Visceral Productions, or did you go with Relapse before V.P. decided not to release any CD's?

Visceral Productions was going to release the Diabolical Conquest, but when the problems happened with Repulse and Relapse, Visceral Productions had to wait to release our fourth album, because Relapse ended up with the right's to the third album! Then a few months later Visceral Productions went out of business! I don't know the whole story on that! Craig from Hemdale is still a good friend!

> *"Impurity, domination, ever-enduring darkness I long for..." From "Impending Diabolical Conquest" on the album Diabolical Conquest*

That was cool that you are still good enough friends with Craig that he's able to come in and do the vocals for your album. Why is he not in the band anymore? Have you found a permanent line-up yet?

When we had a vocalist in the band back in '96, Craig called me up out of the blue and asked if we needed a vocalist! I told him that we had someone, but if things didn't work out then I would give him a call! Then a few months later Nate left the band! I called up Craig and he couldn't be in the band because he ended up getting a real job!!!! He told me if we needed any help he would be more then happy to do it! Yes, we do have a permanent line up except for a bass player (we just have some friends helping out at the moment)! The line up is Daniel (Vocals/Guitars), Kyle (drums), and myself on guitars. Daniel also plays in a band called The Chasm!

Do you think all the lineup changes of the past help or hurt the band? How difficult is it to find new members? Ever thought about calling it quits with Incantation and starting/joining a different band?

I think all the line up changes helped in more ways then it hurt! Because it sucks if you are playing in a band with people just because they were in the band before. It's more important to play with people that like the music! It is a pain in the ass teaching all the old songs to the new members! I don't know if I could ever join another band maybe??? It would be stupid to start another band when it would sound the same as what I'm doing now!

My only complaint about previous releases of Incantation to The Forsaken..., is that the vocals were always so deep and buried in the mix that they pretty much lost their power with me. With The Forsaken... they seem more up front and the CD truly rules. Do you agree/disagree with this?

Well, I do like the way the vocals came out on the MCD. I do like very much the vocals on all of our releases! I see where you are coming from! Well, all I can say is that's cool that you like the vocals on the MCD!

How did the tour in Europe with Avulsed and company go? What are the major differences over in Europe that you saw compared to here in America?

The Repulsive tour was great we had a great time. Avulsed, Deeds of Flesh and Adramelech were all great guys! Some of the shows were great some were shitty as far as turnouts go! At all of our shows there were cool true metal warriors! The big difference in Europe and the U.S. is that the black metal and death metal scene it's more divided! In the U.S. more people like both! Repulse did a great thing by putting on that tour!!!!! "Yous Rules" Dave Rotten!

When were the extra tracks of The Forsaken... recorded? I know they are older tracks, but do you think any of it is a hint as to what future releases by Incantation will sound like?

The extra tracks were recorded by Desmond Tohlurst at his friend's studio! We did it a month after the recording of the Tribute to the Goat live in the studio CD for Elegy. There were a few songs on the Tribute... CD that we didn't like so we re-recorded them but, it ended up being too late for us to use them. So when Relapse asked if we had extra tracks, we gave them those tracks!

Why the move to Cleveland? The scene there in Ohio is pretty good from all the decent bands I see coming from there. What bands from there do you personally like? Did you really just get a place to live there so you wouldn't have to bum a place to sleep from Carol W. anymore?

Things were looking bad for the band in N.J. I knew that I had to leave and find a place where I could concentrate on the band with new members! Yes, the scene in Cleveland is petty good! There are always a good amount of shows! There are also some really killer bands around here like Somnus, Hemdale, From the depths, Regurgitation, Blood Cove. Yes, you are right I was homeless for a few months, I lived in my car for a month then I moved in with Brian from Funeral Pyre/ Mortician for about another month! Now I have a place with Daniel It's pretty cool to not be homeless anymore!

What other tours have you done that went really well? What are some great places to play live? What were some shows that you remember as being really horrible, and why were they bad?

We did so many tours it's hard to say which was the best! The Grave tour was cool! We did one with Vital Remains and Autopsy in 93 that was sick! The tour we did with Mortician was also great! Along with the one we did last year with Vital Remains those guys are cool as fuck! On our tour with Vital Remains last year we played in this club in the Bronx's call the Black Throne! We got there and the promoter told us that he booked like 5 more bands on the show! There was some kind of misunderstanding and we ended up playing at like 3 in the morning in a Sunday night! There were only a few people left, like our friend in Immolation and a few die-hard fans! I was so fucking drunk at that time. I was such a dick! I couldn't play worth of shit! That would have to be the worst show we ever played!

Is Elegy still going to release the "live" album? If so when will it be released?

Yes he will, and it's out now!!!!!!!!!

What's the most personally valued metal item that you own? What makes it so special to you?

That's hard to say! One would be my first concert shirt, a Judas Priest "Defenders of The Faith" tour shirt! Another thing that means a lot to me is my show poster from one of my all time favorite bands Autopsy! I would also have to say the new Sarcofago shirt I got from my friend from the Brazilian band Abhorrence! These things mean a lot to me because I love metal and all these things are part of my metal history!

You just went into the studio for your new album correct? How did it go? When's the new album going to come out?

Yes, we just finished the album that's why it took some time to answer the interview! We are very happy with the way the album came out! The production is excellent. We feel good about all the songs, they are totally sick, evil, brutal and most importantly they are Death Metal! No trendy shit!

That's all I can think of. Any last thoughts?

Thanks for the interview! All you warriors of underground death metal keep up the support! Look for us on tour! Drink the blood of the Goat! Prepare for the impending Diabolical Conquest!

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(Arch Enemy interview contd. from page 7)
various metal bands, but most of them I end up distributing amongst my friends. I'm not that impressed with a lot of bands, but I don't want to get influenced by them either actually. I want to keep my head clean, and I think it's pretty easy to get influenced by other bands. That can be a good thing as well, to keep up with what is going on or whatever.

What's your opinion of the black metal?

I really like some of the stuff that I've heard. Some of it is quite interesting. I quite like the band called Emperor. I thought their last album was okay. Some of it though is just really badly played. (laughing as his daughter starts up again) I'm having a pretty hard time here with my daughter (laughing some more). Yeah, well with black metal, some of it seems very badly played. Some of it also seems to be more about image instead of the actual music. I don't know what your opinion of it is.

I personally like a lot of it, but I think like with anything else you get the good with the bad, but now it seems to be dying out some, and the good bands are staying around and the bad ones are going away.

I like the band Immortal as well, because the music sounds totally sick. Reminds me of early Morbid Angel. I've always been into heavy guitar tones, and most of these bands have lightweight guitar sounds. That kind of leaves me out of the picture. I'm a big fan of heaviness, but there is not one single black metal band that uses that heavy tone on their guitars. There is a lot of aggression there, but it's certainly not heavy.

Okay, I wanted to ask you about the cover art to the new album. Seems to be kind of abstract. Can you tell me about intent behind that, and why the title of the album, Stigmata, was chosen?

"Stigmata" was just a word that I had written down somewhere. It's a pretty powerful word. Being stigmatized is, if you know what that is which is someone bearing the wounds of Christ, a pretty powerful word. It's very metal I think. It's good enough for Arch Enemy. The cover artwork was put together by a friend of mine, and it's really his vision of what it meant. All the faces in the booklet are from the members of Arch Enemy. I think it looks pretty cool.

What are your lyrics generally about?

There are two kinds of lyrics really for Arch Enemy. There are the more personal style of lyrics that I write when I'm depressed or such. They are more about life in general, questioning yourself, or everything going on around you. I also do some lyrics which are more fantasy based. It's more relaxing writing about some fictional. I think it just goes with the flow of the music. The music comes first with Arch Enemy. I kind of get inspired by the music. I just try to get a good flow of words and phrases that would go well with the music.

Has Arch Enemy been out to play live much?

No, not really. We've done some German dates for the last album. We haven't started really touring for the new album yet. The only thing we have booked right now is new Japan tour in September.

Any plans to make it over to the U.S. for some shows?

Hopefully. That'd be really cool. Nothing is planned as of yet though.

So what lies ahead for you and your other upcoming activities?

Just playing some festivals with Spiritual Beggars, and also we're going to be doing some Arch Enemy shows. So that's going to be pretty cool.

When do you see Arch Enemy releasing its next album?

Probably around the spring of next year, and that would be if our time schedule works out. That's what we're planning anyway. Everything always gets delayed. That's my feeling anyway.

You've mentioned having some new material written already?

We've gotten about four or five songs done yes.

Well, I guess I've covered everything I've intended, I want to say thanks for putting out a great album. Anything you want to say to finish this interview?

I just want to thank you for the interview and for supporting this kind of music. Hope everyone is open minded enough to go to the nearest record store and buys the new album. Thanks.

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(...And Oceans interview contd. from page 5)
I don't know what yet. I don't want to plan anything either, coz impulsive reactions are always surprising to all and usually effective too.

Do you always wear corpsepaint for live shows? I noticed some photos with and without the corpsepaint. What does the corpsepaint mean to you?

We used corpsepaint for a long time ago, but not anymore, coz corpsepaint is for black metal and we are not black metal. It meant a lot to us, coz it was the theatric aspect of ...And Oceans and one hell of a mood bringer. We used different colours in our corpsepaint, and maybe we'll some day use it again. We had our own designer who did and designed all the corpsepaint for us, and it became too complicated for us (and him) to drag him along all the time, so we dropped it.

What does the future hold for ...And Oceans? What do you see yourself doing in ten years from now? Do you think that metal will still be a large part of your life then?

Metal music has been near me for over 10 years, and I think it will be at least another 10 years. Definitely for as long as I live. About the future...hmm...maybe we'll record a test CD or just release an album with different sounds of a city, who knows!?!? I don't plan my life too much, just living one day at the time. In that way you won't be disappointed if something goes down the drain.

What merchandise does ...And Oceans have for sale? Are there shirts available yet, and what are they like? Are any of the previous demos for ...And Oceans still available?

No shirts yet, but hopefully soon. Just discussing it with the label. Shirts would be nice, but I'd want to make some swimming suits and trunks with the logo. I don't like band shirts at all. I usually don't copy the old material to people anymore, but does anyone want to listen to our old material these days??? It's fun to listen to the old material when you are drunk, and maybe someday we'll release the old material on CD!?! The sound is not crap on the old demos, so it wouldn't be one of these "unreleased-shit-rehearsal" releases. We have this '97 demo called Mare Liberum which was supposed to be released almost a year ago, but due to some printings problems it wasn't released until May '98. It is the only available demo. Order it directly from: Defender Productions, Öringsgränd 6, 860 30, Sörberge, Sweden for $5.

I thank you for taking the time to answer my questions. What thoughts would you like to leave with the reader as you close this interview?

Thanks for this interview Bart, stay abnormal and remember the 13 molecules of O.B.C!

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Demo Spew

Aggression - S.A.T.C.L.
C/o Pristavakin Serg 394088
Lizukova, 56-110
Voronezh, Russia
As I listen to this Russian band, I find myself hard pressed for anything at all to say really. This act trudges along, wallowing in doomy death, mixing in a bit of melody throughout that has a good overall effect. This demo does offer some catchiness, and I could find myself listening to this from time to time, although it would be quite a bit more listenable if the production was better. Because the production is a bit thin, the music does suffer, and loses some of its power. Once the band corrects the production flaw, I think they could offer some delightful melodic doom. Not a bad attempt at all, aside from those few facts. (Jeff)

Anal Blast – Vaginal Vempire
Insanely brutal pornographic grind! Just what we all need of course! Anal Blast take a shot at Cradle of Filth with their humorous 'Filth like spoof of the Vempire album, having their logo identical as well. I'm sure the feminists would love this tasty little album, with track titles like "Smell Your Cunt" and "Staple Your Puss Lips Together." It's destined to become a smash hit with all females. Next to the massive amounts of perversion, this lovely band does offer up some competent and quite enjoyable grind played at breakneck speed. Twenty-two tracks executed in only twenty-five minutes, and they manage to sneak a Slayer riff in there to boot. And who could blame these guys for not including their names? I know I wouldn't. Great offensive stuff. (Jeff)

Anal Pus – Unsurmountable Exhaustion of Disentombed...
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125581 Moscow
Russia
The demo definitely threw me at first with it's thrash like riffing start, because I was expecting a more grind or death oriented band. After the first track was over, my original thoughts on the band were proven to be true. The first song is an instrumental (unusual place for it in my opinion), and it is a more thrash based song that is well played. Anal Pus get down to the business of grinding when the second song kicks into gear. The vocals are ultra low, and they are just bordering on the point of being silly. For the most part though, they are well done. The musicians in this band are quite talented coming up with some intricate riffing and nice song constructions. The sound is very good as well with only the slapping sound of the bass being a bit too loud at times. Other than that, it is a strong sounding release. The band does show some variation from the death/grind with pieces like the first song, and with the occasional female vocal piece. Very talented band that I hope to hear more of in the future. (Bart)

Arctic Symphony – Sounds of Violent Tendencies to Deface Morality While Destroying Humanity
C/o Russ
P.O. Box 771
Zion, IL 60099
I first heard of this band through the Frozen Dawn #4 comp CD (they were the best band featured on that volume) and even then thought that this band had potential. With this their debut release, they prove to be even more worthy of attention. Arctic Symphony combines a style of death with a fast touch of grind that is uniquely blended to form a style all their own. Instantly you notice the clear production just before you are swept away by a whirlwind of madness, with fluent song writing that sticks in your head. Each instrument has good sound, not sounding like just any other, that further helps to pull you in as the pace continuously moves around. Being marchingly slow to blisteringly fast. This is one band that goes the extra mile to create something interesting in death metal rather than fall in line with the rest of clones. This is a mini-CD worth while for those who search for the new thrill in death and grind alike. Complete with cool band name. (Jeff)

Bestial Deform – Bellum Contra Omnes
pr. Veteranov 25 – 40
198255, St. Petersburg
Russia
Sharp release here that lasts for almost thirty minutes total. The band has a strange guitar tone that is a mix of thrash guitar sharpness with a bit of Swedish fuzz mixed in for an unusual tone. The riffing is quite pleasing to my ears though, and the songs as a whole show quite a bit of thought and work. The vocals are a deep, gruff growl but aren't totally undecipherable and do show some variation and emotion thankfully. They do sound similar to David formerly of Morbid Angel at times. The music is mid-tempo death most of the time with some speedy or slower parts thrown in to keep the listener guessing. The occasional use of keyboards does add nicely to aura at crucial parts in the songs. I like what I hear from this band quite a bit, and look to hear more from them. (Bart)

Beast Petrify – In the Circle of Time
C/o Al*Fahmi
Blk 345, Yishun Ave. 11
#06-173, Singapore 760345
Singapore
Killer! Here we have a Singaporean band by the name of Beast Petrify, who play a unique style of hybrid heavy metal thrash with an overall progressive quality. This demo has a good quality, with a clear production that has just a touch of gruffness to it to give it just that much more balls. It's quite obvious that the

!Highly Recommended!

Aurora Borealis – Praise the Archaic Lights Embrace
P.O. Box 1327
Clinton, MD 20735-5327
Was really looking forward to this new release from Ron and company. They have gone far and beyond the grand heights they conquered with their debut release. The music is still very tightly played, and while it does still have some death/thrash elements to it, the music this album is more black metal based this time around. The vocals are raspier this time than I remember previously and that is one of the main reasons they have a more black metalish sound this time around. The sound quality is better than you will get with a good portion of signed bands, and the same can be said for the CD layout as well. I can find no drawbacks for this release, and I think it's a shame that a professional band like this cannot get signed. (Bart)

Ares Kingdom – Ares Kingdom
1200 Queen's Place
Kansas City, MO 64131
Here we have a rather unexpected demo from the members of Vulpecula (whose full-length we are greatly anticipating!) in the form of Ares Kingdom. The material on this three-song demo bears slight resemblance to Vulpecula, although this band has its own equally unique identity. The vibe herein is that of a cosmic/futuristic one, going about its slow and midpacedness in a dreamy manner yet holding a firm grip over the listener. This is quite stunning and certainly unprecedented in a field of mediocrity. Unlike anything done so far in this ever-crowded underground. Very impressive, intelligent and captivating with elements coming from traditional metal, death, black and beyond all the while outdoing them all to achieve a truly original result. So now we eagerly await further material from this entity. If these descriptions have caught your eye/ear definitely get in touch right away. This is the future. (Jeff)

Cardiovascular Sub-Hypothermia – Pulmonary Descent
C/o Garett Bussanick
3 Teakwood Court
Cream Ridge, NJ 08514
Nice professionally duplicated demo here I have. The music starts off sounding quite similar to Malevolent Creation, but then starts adding a large number of samples and industrial effects to totally change the feel of the music. The music does have a good amount of anger that you can feel through the tape, and I fellows in this band know how to play their instruments and play them well, all the while achieving a distinct sound. The entire amount of song writing on this five song demo is great, instantly catchy with many changes and paces among each song, having intelligent very well played leads that lend even more identity to their makeup. Aside from the music, this comes in a totally professional package, being pro printed and duplicated with lyrics and photos! Look for Beast Petrify to be featured in upcoming issues of Intellektual Spew, but in the mean time definitely get in touch! (Jeff)

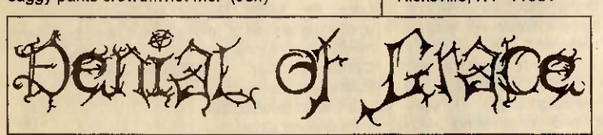
like that aspect a lot. Four-song tape that tests those that have an aversion to the electronic feel to their music. All the instruments are played, so there is no drum machine feel, but some will still not care for this because of all the samples. I find myself liking this a lot. I hate to say it, but they do take some similarity to Fear Factory, but not that much really. The multiple vocals lines all going at once adds to the urgency of the music giving it a crust feel at times too. There are a ton of separate influences here, and I feel the band is honestly trying to do something original. This demo is recommended, but I especially recommend you keep an eye on their future releases. (Bart)

Corpus Mortale – Integration
C/o Jesper Frost
Vølundsgade 21, 2th
2200 Kbh. N.
Denmark

Anyone ever hear of that killer band from Denmark that goes by the name of Iniquity? Yeah? Well fuckin' listen up because a few guys from that band now have a side project (that's actually been around since '92) band that is Corpus Mortale. This band still equals Iniquity in brutality, uniqueness and the overall ability to write great, memorable songs while at the same time being nothing like Iniquity. Which is great because Corpus Mortale have an identity all their very own. The music on Integration is sharply executed with enough brutality to kill a third world country. These four individuals bring together a style of death metal that has that certain something that makes it stand out, with a wide range of speeds and interesting riffs. In the vocal area, this album also offers good variation for along side the deep guttural lead throat is a blacker venomous harshness in which the two meld very well. I see this band being picked up soon. They're unsigned at the moment I believe. Definitely something for you keepers of death to drool over. Die! Suffocate! (Jeff)

Corruption – Crushed
2656 West 134th Circle
Broomfield, CO 80020

This is one of those releases that appears heavy at first, but shortly after getting into it you notice it's just some crunchy guitars with "angry" vocals that falls extremely short of any real identity. This is that type of really modern pseudo-Korn, Pantera, Sepultura mix, watered down with a lack of creativity that offers nothing. Crushed offers more bark than bite and with such a professional package I would think a band would put a little more effort into the final product. Aside from the three tracks that clock in at near sixteen minutes, the layout is very bland, conveying no real message or stimulation what so ever. This is one for the saggy pants crowd...not me. (Jeff)



Denial of Grace – Denial of Grace
C/o Jeff
2629 Yeargan Road
Murfreesboro, TN 37130

I finally get to hear a demo release by these guys after seeing them live a handful of times. They are just simply crushing live, and I wanted to hear what they could come up with from the studio. Death metal along the lines of Obituary, but not so much that you want to scream clone. The band just comes up with some riffs that are just made for live shows. Jeff's throat is another one of the high points for this demo. His vocals go from a high pitched scream to an ultra low gurgle, and it all sounds good. His vocals sound sincerely pissed off, and that is definite plus in my book. With the combination of the marching riffs and his ranting you can't help but get into this band if you call yourself a death metal fan. I'm not sure this demo is officially out yet, because this copy I have wasn't completely mixed down yet, but definitely get in touch with this band. (Bart)

Disarray – Spreading The Death Plague
P.O. Box 975
Dickson, TN 37055

Four song cassette from a Disarray live show. I was at this particular show, and I know that originally Chuck was hoping to get this on a 7", but I guess that didn't come to be. This does show exactly what Disarray is like live. It takes a couple tracks from each of their two previous demos. The sound is okay for a live show, and the crowd is pretty much only heard in between the songs. Disarray is currently working on their full-length release which will be out soon. This release isn't meant to be considered their new official release. It's just something the band wanted to do for its fans. Contact Chuck about this release, and ask him about the new material as well. (Bart)

Disciple – Splinter in the Mind's Eye
C/o Jeff Lenormand
322 Genevieve
Pacifica, CA 94044

Damn this band plays fast at times. When they want to blast they can do so with the best of them. Unfortunately just being able to blast does not always result in a great album. There are some moments on this self-released CD though that do demand my attention. The vocal lines and riffing go hand in hand nicely on the song "Holy Warfare." The band is definitely death metal. It takes some from Suffocation at times with their fast grinding beats, but also takes some riffing styles of Cannibal Corpse. Saying that, I must admit the band does not have that worthless clonish feel, but I do wish they'd get away from sounding like those two bands as often as they do. The album is a few minutes short of a hour, and has fifteen songs on here (one being a Kiss cover of "God of Thunder"). I commend the band for the decent release, but this is not going to get them noticed until they step things up musically. (Bart)

Disfigured – Paroxysm
C/o Ryan Schimmenti
92 Park Ave.
Hicksville, NY 11801

This band is lucky that I have seen them live before writing this review. I saw this band with the new line-up at the Illnoize Death Fest, and they were absolutely crushing with the new members. The music on here does show promise, but doesn't hint at the greatness the band possesses now. They are going in the studio to put down some new tracks, and I am certain that the new release will destroy. This release is similar to Cannibal Corpse at times with their riffing structure. The vocals are pretty low, and are the same with their new singer. Four songs here that will please any death metal fan that likes the occasional blast thrown in the mix. It's professionally packaged, and it is worth checking out. Do watch out for their new release, because I believe it will crush. (Bart)

Disgorge – Chronic Corpora Infest
P.O. Box 1-310
76001
Quetretaro, Qro.
Mexico

Grind!!! This band out of Mexico plays insane, faster that the speed of light grind! I get the impression that these guys must worship Carcass not only by the music but by the track titles. Just try and pronounce "Stygmatodermuropyanephrosism on Impetiginose Urogenism!" Although these guys play somewhat in the style of early Carcass, they go their own path none the less. Disgorge manage to bring a technical aspect to their maddened style of grind through blazing guitar work and lightening fast drumming that breaks and changes often. The vocals are beyond guttural which sicken things up quite a bit on their own. Each of the nine tracks contain rather odd intros that add a nice morbid effect to the overall feel of this lengthy offering. This is definitely a great demo, and I hope to see the band make it onto disc format some day, but in the meantime get in touch. (Jeff)

Disinter – Torn From the Grave
C/o Mike Le Gros
P.O. Box 34919
Chicago, IL 60634

Not sure if this three song CD is for sale, because I was given a copy of the CD from Mike at the Illnoize fest. I wasn't kind to Disinter's full-length a few issues ago, but things seem to be up for this band now. The music is still straight up death metal. I like the mixture of vocal styles on this release with the high pitched scream occasionally and the low growling style the main vocal style used. The riffs are more memorable, and the music as a whole doesn't sink into mediocrity anymore. This release is just under ten minutes long, and like I said, I'm not sure if it's for sale. It's well worth getting in contact though to see what is up with Disinter because things are improving. (Bart)

Embalm – Prelude to Obscurity
C/o Oscar Perez
115 Bayview
Madison, WI 53715

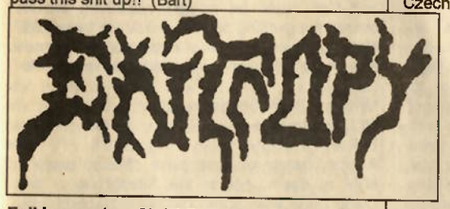
Have to say I wasn't surprised to find out that Embalm were ultra-heavy death metal. The thing that did surprise me is that this music goes over quite well live. I saw these guys as the first band at the Illnoize Death Fest, and while people were just starting to fill up the place they got up there and executed some great death metal. The songs are filled with thick slabs of riffs that cause your head to bang along to the beat. This music isn't that intricate, but I can overlook that because the music is just very catchy. Very low growling vocals gargle along, but aren't so low that they are silly. The production is a bit weak, but the mix is solid and just turning it up more fixes that problem. This is a promising new death metal act that we should see more of in the future. (Bart)

Embodiment – No God
C/o Grimm
400 E. Rick Rt.
Dickson, TN 37055

Embodiment are somewhat of a local band coming from the Dickson area here in Tennessee, and are one of only a handful of bands from this area that actually have something to offer. These guys fall into the death metal category, seeming to have found a niche all their own. Their first demo No God features five mid-paced tracks, with the occasional blast beat thrown in for variation. The riffing of guitarist/vocalist Grimm heavily flows along, becoming at times reminiscent of slower Morbid Angel tunes with an underlying touch of groove and slight bits of melody that work well for the band. Tracks such as "Blasphemy" and "No God" display this element well. The vocals add further change, being a deep growl at times and moving into a high black type scream that blends in nicely. It would be nice to see the band speed things up overall a little more, but a fine job at a first demo none the less. This demo comes pro-packaged and duplicated so drop 'em a line. (Jeff)

Entropy – Tangled Human Complex
P.O. Box 745
Brookline, NH 03033

Why I have I not heard more of this band? Extremely heavy hardcore along the lines of All Out War or Zao. The riffing is contagious, and it haunts you until you play the tape yet again. Then you just start the cycle all over again though. The music has that heavy thrash base that is common to hardcore, but the guitar sound is so heavy that I can see many a metal head really getting into this. The production is top of the line too. The tape is a bit dated since it came out in '96, but that's why I'm shocked I haven't at least seen this tape mentioned more often since. The abstract yet powerful artwork on the cover is a perfect touch to this professionally recorded/duplicated tape. Don't pass this shit up!! (Bart)



Evil Incarnate – Christ Destroyed
C/o Mike
2117 Elisha, Apt. C
Zion, IL 60099

At first listen, this band appears to be rather simple in its writing style, yet after the first listen you find yourself wanting to listen again, and in turn, discover that there's a bit more to Evil Incarnate. Mid-paced with the occasional speedy part, Christ Destroyed chops along in a solid death metal fashion, at times reminiscent of Incantation. Accompanying the solid guitar work is the occasional use of keys along with the use of a gong that adds a nice eerie touch of originality, with of course, the deep death metal vomits. This is a band with potential that, with time, could develop into quite a monster. (Jeff)

Forgotten Silence – Senyaan
C/o Alexander Novácek
Máchova 487
665 01 Rosice U BRNA
Czech Republic

Well, this is proof that the Czech Republic can crank out quality music that is not brutal death metal. This is a strange mix of death and doom that never gets stale. It is full of innovation and originality. Where to even start though describing this music is the difficult part. The mood is always dark and depressing, and has this underlying hint of aggression intertwined in the music. The vocals are melodic with the female operatic style and extreme with the deep growling as well. The music is quite detailed as well. It is simplistic at times, but then a slow piece moves along quite nicely with talented playing. The fast parts hit sporadically with anger, and then the next thing you know they are pulling an almost big band piece out as well. Wide range of emotions and styles here that will particularly appeal to the doom fans. I think this will help the band get signed, so definitely get in touch with this promising act. (Bart)

Goatfire – Gutted Hell
Hellflame Productions
C/o Solieri Nicola
C.P. 1004
40124 Bologna, Italy

This Italian band plays its music in the Darkthrone style although they are every bit as competent in their songwriting, having more diversity at times as well. This demo has much to offer being fast and aggressive in that style with exits from the blasting paths now and again to vary things up. With time and effort, their songwriting could develop into something out of the way, solid and fresh. That remains to be seen though. Some change or difference in the vocal department would be to their advantage. The main point is mediocrity here. Next time... (Jeff)

Godless Truth – The Desperation
C/o Zdenek Simecek
P.O. Box 53
771 11 Olomouc 1
Czech Republic

Yet another one of Czech Republic's death metal bands' sent in material for review. I don't know what I did special in Czech Republic, but I think I have gotten almost as many demos from the Czech Republic alone as I have from all other countries outside North America. Enough about that...onto the music. This band is extreme death metal with a touch of technical ability. The sounds they come up with are similar to Death to me, but the vocals are a good deal deeper. The solos are nicely played, and there are some nice harmonies as well. There are parts in each song where the band goes off on some tangent, and sometimes the song suffers because of that. They are more concerned with playing each part and for the most part, the songs do not gel well as a whole. This demo is sharp looking with both a clear, color band photo along with lyrics. The production is good as well. I do find my mind wondering after a while, because I get the feeling I've heard this all before. When the band takes one of its musical breaks then it's noteworthy, but that doesn't happen enough for me to save it. (Bart)

Götterdämmerung – Sturmgott
C/o Werner Nyar Linke
Klopp 4
55471 Fronhofen
Germany

I was very happy to see that this project of Werner has stuck around to put out another demo. I liked the last demo a great deal when it came out a few years ago. This demo shows a bit of growth away from the industrial touch that he previously incorporated, but the music is still reliant on the drum machine. The riffing seems to more humanistic and emotional. The vocals are even deeper this release than I remember them being in the past. The music is a strange mix of death and doom mixed in with that underlying feel of industrial due to the drum machine. Highly original is what I considered Götterdämmerung in the past, and that is still very true to this day. I've already asked Werner about an interview to appear in #6, and he said he'd be very happy to do one. Considering his interviews in the past it should turn out very interesting. Get this for now. (Bart)

Graal – Sigullum Naturae
C/o Leonid Savin
244030 Sumy
Ukraina

What an extremely difficult demo to get through. I appreciate the band is trying to do something different, but this is more irritating than anything else. The music comes off as a jazz influenced doom band. The vocals are slow and drawn out trying to sound tortured, but they just grate on my nerves. The music changes tempos and riffs quite often, and nothing seems to blend together well. They throw in outside elements such as a flute sound, and it just gets lost in the shuffle instead of adding to the sound. The mix is tough to take with the vocals and bass being too loud. Isn't much here for me to recommend personally. Like I said, I find it refreshing that the band is trying something original, but this just isn't going to cut it. (Bart)

Grenouer – Border of Misty Times
P.O. Box 631
Perm-23
614023, Russia

If it seems that I have a lot of releases from Russia, it is because I did a merchandise trade with Vladimir of Rest in Peace distro. I sent him copies of my zine for various demos on his distro. Great way to hear some bands from far away that I normally don't get to hear, let alone review. This is one of the good bands in the package that he sent me. I see flashes of influence here and there that remind me of Grave then the next band I recognize is Morbid Angel. Actually though, this band has come up with some solid death metal that has its own sound. The tempo is normally pretty fast, but not on the bordering of being total grind. The riffing is often quite controlled and well down. Sound is excellent here, with eight songs total (one being an intro) you get a good listening experience here before it is all over. This band has added some melody here to give it some more emotion that goes along with the guttural vocals. Hopefully we'll hear more of this band in the future, because they have the talent to get bigger in this metal community. (Bart)

Hatred – Two Song Promo
P.O. Box 10264
Alexandria, VA 22310
I had fears that this band had called it a day, but then I get this two song promo cassette in the mail. This is a taster for their upcoming CD release. They have grown some from the thrash like At the Gates influence they previously had. The music shows some resemblance to black metal more these days, but could also be taken as some Swedish death as well. The songs aren't as catchy as they use to write them, but the songs also show some growth as musicians and songwriters. I like what I hear, and I'm looking forward to their full-length now. (Bart)

Last Transgression - Advance CD tracks
C/o Terry Thornton
P.O. Box 680695
Prattville, AL 36066
This is an advance for their forthcoming CD, and the quality of this actual tape is a bit low as it's yet to be mastered and is a rough mix and such. Although, the quality isn't the best on this advance, it does clearly show that this band has potential. Last Transgression combine a strange mixture of thrash-like metal with a crust type style having vocals of an EyeHateGod nature. The song writing is competent and is catchy for the most part within the mid-paced to slower range, every now and then throwing in a surprise here and there. It's definitely worth looking into the final product of so look out for the name. (Jeff)

Living Impaired – Living Impaired
C/o Eric Gosselin
8 Tanglewood Dr. #5
Lewiston, ME 04240
Six song demo release from this hard working band. For a band that doesn't have a label backing them, they are commended for doing their own tours as often as they do. The band believes in its music, and it's unfortunate I'm not that into their style of death metal. The music does has a flare for unusual riffing fills, but it all leaves me kind of empty. The vocals are a scratchy scream that lower to a more guttural sound as well. The music does have a hardcore influence that appears at times as well, but it doesn't really help for me. The sound is good as well, but the music is what it all boils down to. I just don't care for this. (Bart)

Machinery – Reconstruction
P.O. Box 826
Stratford, CT 06497
No one could ever say that Machinery isn't professional because the two promotional packages I've gotten from them so far go far and beyond what any rich label would even do. The band believes in their music 100%, and that admirable in a country that only seems to like the brutal death grind even to this day on the whole. The band plays a mix of Judas Priest and Iron Maiden style traditional metal. The vocalist doesn't sound as much like Joey Belladonna like he did on the last album, and he's seemed to find a bit more of his own sound. This album is a bit more rockin' and less metal than the last album though. The production is really nice here, and the packaging is excellent. Fans of traditional metal will want this, but I can't see many other metal fans really getting into this. (Bart)

Machinery

Martyr - Hopeless Hopes
P.O. Box 832
Cap-de-la-Madeleine
Quebec
Canada G8T 8Y7
Here we have an interesting band coming from Quebec with their first self-financed CD. I was glad to receive this disc, for it comes from left field to offer a great listen, far astride the normal stint of things. The band puts together songs that are instantly memorable like; "Non Conformis" and "Arsnova" that flow briskly along. A particular category of music doesn't come to mind when listening to Martyr, other than heavy. I would describe this as progressive heavy metal with the musical ability of these four members being extremely high. This Canadian quartet align their skills to produce vivid, lively, three dimensional compositions that reach out to the listener with dominating amounts of melody and solid backing riffs. A crystal clear production allows for each instrument to come across clearly audible in their whirlpool of brilliantly crafted tunes, full of ingenious melodic solos to spice things up as well. This band's identity lies within melody and its exceptional ability to build tracks of memorable songwriting. A more heavy and obscure Dream Theatre comes to mind when searching for comparisons, along with a slightly less aggressive Death at times. Accompanying these gruff death metal like vocals are moments of hinted at thrash in their ever varying equations. This is a release that could challenge any in packaging and should bring delight to any fan of technical metal. To sum it up in two words; brilliant songwriting. (Jeff)

Maskim – Impaled
P.O. Box 1641
Clinton, IA 52732-1641
Here we have an American black metal band. This is in the Nordic vein (i.e. Darkthrone and the like) which would lead you to believe, that is if you're pessimistic towards black metal, that this is just same third rate rehashed American bullshit, but hear hear, I say differently! There's something about this band that's appealing within their varied tempo blackish material. The riffs presented on this five song demo are very catchy and believe it or not (maybe it's just me), they actually have an underlying real metal feel about them which is great. Bring this out a bit more and bring some variation into the vocals and that would be golden. Working on the overall songwriting as well would be beneficial. Nothing major in terms of down points. Comes in a sharp full color cover. Write for more info. (Jeff)

Midian – Black Shadows Fall
6827 Southridge
Dallas, TX 75214
A nice change of pace here. Midian plays a style of doom, not in the Skepticism or My Dying Bride way, but in the Black Sabbath and Saint Vitus vein. The music on this three song pro-packaged, pro-duplicated demo is interesting, being heavy and rude just like the masters! Although I'm not the biggest doom fan by any means, I can respect this, and I know a good thing when I see it so if you're into the above mentioned bands/styles then you would definitely benefit from this. They keep things interesting by keeping the pace moving around, capturing that dark doomish vibe perfectly. Cool! (Jeff)

!Highly Recommended!

Invasion – To the Eternity
C/o Vadim Medvedev
Kurzemes pr. 66-14
Riga, LV 1067 Latvia
Here we have an obscure band from Latvia. The first thing you notice about this is the packaging. This would have to be one of the finest demos I've seen in quite awhile as far as packaging goes, as it's full-color, pro-printed all the way around and has great cover art with pictures and lyrics as well. You see the artwork and packaging suits the music very well. Invasion mixes together straight forward heavy metal with a touch of death metal and thrash, showing an outright ability of knowing how to handle their instruments. The thirty-one minutes of music on this demo are finely crafted, linking together mid-paced tunes accented by the use of keywork that blends nicely in the background to give this an overall feel of originality. Also showing further uniqueness are the gruff lead vocals that lie somewhere between a traditional heavy metal style and an almost death metal style with the occasional use of an out-of-the-ordinary female vocals that meld quite well with the already unique atmosphere. This is definitely one of the best demos I've come across in a long time. Invasion embody sheer class with an exceptional ability to craft music of an amazing quality with great production. This band should definitely not be overlooked and should be signed by someone immediately!! (Jeff)

November's Doom – For Every Leaf That Falls
C/o Paul
P.O. Box 1756
Bolingbrook, IL 60440
Doom fans take note. You will be slashing your wrists in joy over this three song EP. Apparently this is a taster for an upcoming full-length release. The obvious comparisons to early Anathema and newer My Dying Bride must be applied here, but this is some great doom with enough originality to keep my interest. The use of the female vocals in places is one, and the music just overall oozes of emotion. The mixture of deep growling vocals and female vocals makes for a nice accent on the music. Not an original idea, but it is well done. The music is well played, but simplistic. Then again, it's kinda hard for doom music to be intricate now isn't it? The time on this CD clocks in a little under nineteen minutes, but any doom fan will want to pick this up. This isn't for everyone, but anyone into emotional music will want to search this out. (Bart)

Odor Mortis - Under Bloody Sky
C/o Alexey
Mira st. 32-297
624205, Lesnoy-5
Russia
To be honest, I found this band quite annoying. This demo starts out with some kind of jazzy riffing that I don't care for at all, then the band moves on to try and become brutal at one point, yet fall considerably short due to their weak and undefined guitar sound. The whole time you get quite deep, death metal vocals over all of this which just doesn't seem right at all. Several times throughout this demo it seems like these guys are trying to play some type of surf music (yuck!) which I can't understand. And to end the demo out, Odor Mortis close with a somewhat thrashy tune that was the best of the lot, although still hindered by that weak guitar sound. It seems like this band can't make up its mind as to what style of music they want to play, which is quite annoying! I'll end on a positive note to say that the cover of this demo was somewhat tasty, featuring a nude woman looking to the sky, smearing blood upon her chest. Thumbs up for that guys! (Jeff)

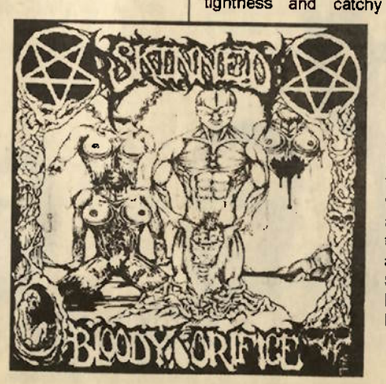
Oktober – Heathen Pride
198 Buchert Rd.
Gilbertsville, PA 19525
Tried unsuccessfully to get through this CD a few times before I finally did it. There are places on this CD that I find so irritating that I can't help but hit stop and listen to something else. Yes, that's right, I didn't like this CD. By the look of the CD, you think you're going to get some raw black metal piece similar to Darkthrone. Raw is correct, but black metal it isn't. This has a more thrash based style to it all. There are some faster parts but lend themselves more to death/grind instead. The vocals are a big obstacle for me being that when he tries to sing clean, he fails in a big way. The vocals are normally a gruff yell, that aren't too bad, but the clean style he uses from time to time is really hard to swallow. The music for the most part is quite simplistic as well. The sound quality is pretty raw although everything seems mixed in well, so I can't take off for that. This project does show some willingness to experiment with new ideas, but this just isn't going to cut it. (Bart)

One Last Sin – Promo '98
37 Weston Ave.
Fishkill, NY 12524
One Last Sin takes another step away from death metal and more into the hardcore genre. I would sometimes be suspicious of bands making that move, but it is definitely for the betterment of One Last Sin because they are much better as an extreme hardcore act. This promo is made up of two songs that are on the split 7" with Withdrawn. I kinda want to compare them to Earth Crisis, but I cringe at the thought because I hate Earth Crisis, but this I like quite a bit. They use heavy riffing with a mixture of yelled/growled vocal deliveries. I can see them stirring up the violent crowds, but then again that has to be mandatory for hardcore in my eyes. Worth getting in touch I believe. (Bart)

Pathologist Department - Resistance Depression
(Address unknown)
Pathological Department are said to play "Atmospheric emotional death metal" which is quite true, but I would go so far to say they have a touch of grind in there as well. The music on this nine song demo is pretty varied tempo wise. The band mixes up its tracks with blast beats; opting to slow it down the next moment, seeming to have a heavy groove going throughout each song which works well. Their use of synth work (providing the emotional and atmospheric parts) and other strange sounds keeps things interesting as well. Their deep, somewhat one dimensional vocals are the only negative thing (yet not really negative) I can find, although they do their job well in places and suffocate the music in other places. This is all wrapped in an all glossy, tri-fold J card which adds a nice professional touch. (Jeff)

Requiem – Christ Has Risen
1200 Nth Lamb #36
Las Vegas, NV 89110
Painful music here. Painfully awful. This attempt to vary from thrash to hardcore to power metal just doesn't fly. The vocals are irritating from the starting repeated line "Christ Has Risen" all the way through to the end. This may have been two different releases on this one tape (Christ Has Risen and Dawn of Souls), but it really doesn't matter, and I can't find the documentation on this band to confirm or deny that idea. There is a lot of material that deserves your attention in the underground. This band isn't one of them. (Bart)

S.C.A.L.P. - Through Eternity
C/o Rizhenock
Novosilskaya str.
10-39, Orel
302030, Russia
This band (with its rather strange name) plays a great hyrbid of death and doom that blends well, having an aura of melancholic sadness that builds on originality. The sound achieved on this lengthy demo is quite balanced, having a brutal edge on one hand, yet having a somber and quite effective sound on the other. This is where the band is most impressive in its melding of such elements to execute true emotional compositions. The music on Through Eternity is rich with variation and many experimental instrumentations. Also contributing to the overall charm ranging from clean to gruff, death like vocals, all being equally effective. The visuals of the packaging also add atmosphere, being naturalistic photos showcased in an all glossy layout with lyrics, credits, etc. Impressive! (Jeff)



Scepter – Up Thy Ass
(see interview for address)
I heard their mini-CD release, Metal Supremacy, before this release. This was their first demo, and I was sent it when the band had returned the completed interview that appeared here in #5. This is very much along the same lines as Metal Supremacy, but I do think the band has shown some growth from this demo to the mini-CD. The first song on here, "Up Thy Ass," though is a classic that will have any metalhead banging their head along to the beat. The rest of the songs are just as good, but as a whole this demo ranks a little lower than their mini-CD because the songs just aren't as overall catchy or heavy as they are with Metal Supremacy. They show a bit more reliance on Celtic Frost with the chopping riffing and the similar grunts that Usurper is also fond of doing these days. The sound is a bit clouded, but gives the music that dirty sound which is perfect in my eyes for metal like this. This is true heavy metal, and I do recommend it, but especially check out Metal Supremacy and their upcoming full-length album on Merciless Records. (Bart)

Skinned / Mentally Murdered – Split of Sickness
P.O. Box 2945 / 9230 Hooker St.
Loveland, CO 80539 / Westminster, CO 80030
I got this from Travis of Skinned, and after hearing godly things about this band, I got to hear for myself what the hype was all about. I won't beat around the bush either (like I ever have with reviews) because Skinned is here to fucking tear shit up. The mix of sheer brutality and catchiness is so perfect I don't know if the band could ever top these six songs. Every song is devastating death metal this lends me to compare them to Dying Fetus a bit. The Cannibal Corpse comparison must be made as well. I just about forget there is another band on this CD. The second band Mentally Murdered unfortunately doesn't have the goods to stand up to the ferocity of Skinned. I don't know of many bands who could though. Mentally Murdered play some decent death metal that, while like Skinned, doesn't tread on any original territory, but it just doesn't stand up to the tightness and catchy songs that Skinned produces. The Cannibal Corpse likeness is almost too much at times for Mentally Murdered. Both bands have a deep love for gory lyrics. Death metal fans will love this, and I would encourage anyone to buy this for the Skinned tracks alone. (Bart)

Skitzo – Psychobabble
P.O. Box 1721
Healdsburg, CA 95448

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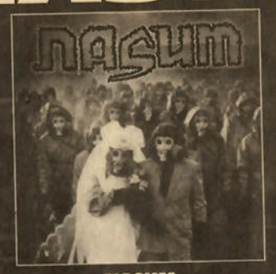

NASUM
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RR 6986

DILLINGER ESCAPE PLAN
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MCD $5 - RR 6410

GORE BEYOND NECROPSY
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Quo Vadis – Forever
P.O. Box 44
Montreal, NGD, QU H4A-3P4
Canada
This release has been out for a while now, but since I just got a dubbed copy of this CD I'll definitely review it especially considering how good this release is. Very well played death metal with a good deal of experimentation here. The music seems to go off on some artistic tangent, then all of the sudden the music is brought back to the basics with a pure explosion of aggression. The band is extremely talented and willing to experiment with their sound and try out new ideas. Everything about this release just oozes class. One would guess that this would be a label release due to the sharp layout and excellent sound, but Quo Vadis did this release purely on their own. Long live the underground when excellent releases such as this one make it throughout the scene. This band will be signed soon I'm sure of it. Not picking this up would be a shame. (Bart)

Here's another band that I was previously unaware of, although there's info says that they've been going since '85 and judging from this, I wish I had been familiar with Skitzo. Skitzo play a style of heavy metal with some death metal characteristics in a unique way. This release Psychobabble starts out with Lance (the band's mastermind) being put under hypnosis by Doctor Lector, and the album carries on in this manner with Lance recalling past times of his life and such. Hence the title Psychobabble. This way of story telling is done in an excellent and creative way that adds quite a bit of identity to the already firm musick. Something about this band has a slight Macabre air about it, although the two are nothing alike. The acoustic piece is hilarious in which Lance kills Maggie (maggots) his babysitter as a child with a shovel in the backyard, and then goes back as an adult to dig'er up again. Great stuff! It sports a grizzly cover. Nasty!! Everyone get in touch if you're the least bit interested. It's variously paced thoughout. Finally, what is up with all the vomiting? (Jeff)

Sludge! – New Jersey Hate Core
C/o Dave Orkin
1932 Cologne Ave. Apt. # C-9
Mays Landing, NJ 08330
Starting to see more bands like Jaww and Pipe that are coming into the scene. The type of bands that are mixing hardcore and death metal together to get something cool sounding. You can add Sludge! to that list. The band comes up with huge riffs that will force you get your ass in the pit and fuck shit up. The catchy riffs here will get your attention, and before you know it the band flies off the handle into a blast beat. Before long though, it's back to that catchy riff that got your attention from the start. The vocals are deep, but yelled out in a convincing manner. There are four songs here, and "Do Unto" is my fave for this release. The tape is professionally duplicated, and has great sound too. The band is in this for the long haul so get into them now before they get big. (Bart)

Sludge! – Alone and Twisted
(same address as above)
Got this newer demo at the same time of their previously reviewed demo, so I got a one-two punch from this death/hardcore band. The music is just as good here, and it does show a bit of growth in the song construction. The songs also seem a bit darker this time around too which seems to make their band name fit a bit better this time around. The sound is great again, and there are four songs on here that do pass by pretty quickly. I saw this band's material for sale quite often at the recent Illnoize Death Fest so I know the band is pushing themselves now. This is just as recommended as their first demo. (Bart)

Social Animosity – How to Hate
1436 Autumn Knoll
Hermitage, TN 37876
I caught the end of this band's live set in Nashville and was highly impressed even though I caught little more than one song. This band mixes a wide range of musical styles to come up with something interesting. They seem to take from punk, death metal and even black metal some. The vocals are screamed and are pretty effective. They seem to mix the crust scream with a touch of black metal rasp to them. The band blasts along, and although the bass is a bit too loud the sound is very good. The crust fans would be most interested in this, but I can see most metal fans enjoying this. Good demo, and I look forward to seeing this play live for a full set. (Bart)

Spinecast – Rehearsal Tape '98
C/o Cameron Pinkerton
P.O. Box 471
Harvest, AL 35749
Cam sent me a copy of this roughly mixed (read shitty sounding) tape to show how the band has grown since their last demo. The growth shows a lot of promise once they get a solid lineup and get some time in a good sounding studio. They currently have Garth of Fleshtized handling the bass duties for them, and they are planning on recording new material soon. They have gotten away from sounding like Slayer and have progressed to the more extreme comparisons of such bands as Cannibal Corpse. Having seen these guys live, I know they show some promise so get in touch and I'm sure Cam with let you know about the upcoming release. (Bart)

Tales of Darknord - Endless Sunfall
C/o Alex Kantemirov
Chelyabinskaya, 14
Volgograd
Russia, 400120
This would have to be the best of the batch of Russian demos I received (followed by the S.C.A.L.P. and Rest in Peace comp. Tape). This band combines a great mixture of death and black with a touch of grind to top things off. Being firmly rooted in the land of death metal, Tales of Darknord create brutal riffs and build upon them, incorporating elements of the other mentioned genres to create brutal darkness. The use of dual vocals creates further uniqueness, being varied between a death type growl and a black style rant. The band keeps the tempos moving around which in turn keeps things interesting at all times. There's an abundance of material here too, for Endless Sunfall contains seven studio tracks and five live tracks which are of suprisingly good sound quality. This demo also features the best production of the half a dozen demos I received as well and once again this release features the best layout of the bunch. Coming in a large fold out, all glossy package with lyrics, photos and what not. Any fan of brutal music is encouraged to track down this band! (Jeff)

Thorns of the Carrion – The Scarlet Tapestry
P.O. Box 1586
Newport, KY 41072
As my interest in the doom scene grows, this comes with perfect timing. The Scarlet Tapestry is an opus of pure dreadful emotions wrapped in many textured layers of complete desolation. Haunting synth seems to be the basis of Thorns of the Carrion, in which they build upon, combining the sorrowful backbone of their music, enriched by flute and harp alike, with nicely arranged acoustic pieces as well. Their usage of the flute, which is done in a unique way, is one of many bewitching focal points that stand out. Several vocal styles are used in variation, ranging from a gothic style of clean to a death like growl to a black type of force that all accent their compositions very well. The only point of alteration I could bring to mind would be to pull up the heavy guitars a bit in the mix to add a touch more of outright power. Given this, the band has brought together an album of epic proportions in the most depressive of emotions, focusing on the true sadness of life. Not only is this album musically impressive, it comes offered in an equally stimulating twenty page glossy package that is of a most professional nature. Those who look at life in the most hopeless of ways and see beauty thrive only to wither and die, look to The Scarlet Tapestry for death awaits... (Jeff)

Thy Darkest Empire – In the Sorrow of a Crimson Sea
6435 West Jefferson Blvd. Suite #666
Fort Wayne, IN 46804
One song promo tape here that bares likeness to the speedy black metal of Immortal and older Ancient. The music blares along at a breakneck pace the entire song not letting up for a second. The song is surprisingly well produced with some pretty awesome emphasis on the vocals which I liked a lot. This song isn't going to break any ground, but this is well played for what it is. I can't see going out of your way to just pick up this one song tape, but it would be advisable to make notice of any future releases with more songs on them. (Bart)

Turning Black – With Madness I Relate
C/o Andrew Cantwell
16 Carlingford Road
Epping, NSW
2121, Australia
This demo was annoying right off the bat. Fuzzy (too much so) guitars and drums that were too loud with decent vocals in the death metal territory. The whole sound of this demo is just off balance, and I can't get much out of it. The slow parts are the real downer as the fast parts come off better to my ears. This band lies somewhere in the Death neighborhood with an

ever so slightly touch of black like influence in mind. (Turning Black?...not really.) The majority of the material is slow and boring (not that speed decides whether a band is good or what) which I can't get into. There's also an industrial feel to this as well, but we won't bother going into that. (Jeff)

Turning of the Gears – Sensory Obliteration
P.O. Box 2309
Bell Gardens, CA 90202

Interesting release here that I have. This band takes some from the bleakness that early Godflesh used to have, but has tweaked it a good deal to come up with something of their own. The music takes quite a few turns as well away from the heavy industrial sound. Sometimes things chug along with some cool riffing that is more similar to Napalm Death's Harmony Corruption era, and sometimes the vocals just go ape shit like that of Agoraphobic Nosebleed. The music overall is a bit more metal tinged than old Godflesh, because the riffing is more of a mainstay for each song. Five songs here total up to almost twenty-five minutes of music. The industrial touch isn't so overwhelming that it will turn anti-futuristic metal heads away. I enjoyed this quite a bit, and although it's not the greatest thing I've heard in a long while, it is definitely much more appreciated to see a band trying something new. (Bart)

Various Artists – The Second Dawn of Meggido
P.O. Box 268
Corapolis, PA 15108

You should have already bought a copy of #11 of Eternal Darkness 'zine or else you won't be getting this. This compilation comes with the zine, and it is filled with some great bands that makes the cost of the zine more than worth your hard earned dollars. I'm not going to go in depth with this compilation. Most are either extremely brutal death or blackened metal. The production is even which is uncommon for tape comps like this. Bands featured are Ligeia, Cromlech (Swe.), Enchanted Sorrow, Severence, Messe Noir, Impact Winter (twice), Demonic Surface, Martire (twice), Darken, Demonic Sacrifice, From the Dark, Tyrant, Inverted and Nepenthe. There is a lot of music here, and most can say they've only heard a few of these bands so it's well worth getting this tape to check out some new bands. Some info about each band is included in the liner notes, but it tells you to check the magazine for the addresses of the acts included. Solid compilation here, and like I've said...it's especially worth it considering what you're getting for your money. (Bart)

Various Artists – Frozen Dawn Comp. #4
809 Towering Oaks
Jacksonville, AR 72076

There's not a lot I can say for this compilation. I remember when the first one came out, and it was basically the same. All the bands included on this comp are, well...average. Morbid Entrée and Arctic Symphony are really the only two who, in my opinion, stand out in the least. Also the band Wake, who is included on this one, shows some signs of originality but their recordings are really on the bad side, mainly due to the vocals being up way too high in the mix. I've seen this band live several times, and they come over better live with their mixture of Eyehategod and the Doors (which is quite strange). Every band on this disc except for Wake, are of the death/grind type and all come across mediocre for the most part. My advice would be to seek out bands of a more original nature for the next compilation. (Jeff)

Various Artists – Oh! The Humanity!
504 Lou Court
Antioch, TN 37013

Damn, thirty-eight tracks on this compilation. All or most of these bands are from Tennessee. The music ranges from metal to rock to punk and everything in between. It would take a full page to cover all the material on here so I'll pull out the highlights for this release. Social Animosity start off the CD with their brand of tortured metal. Impetuous Doom are up next with their best track I've heard to date. It sounds even better live when they play that awesome death metal song. Relapse Records artists Today is the Day play their brand of Neurosis like metal. Right after that is Denial of Grace who are one of my favorite local death metal bands. Boobyhatch who are interviewed in this issue are on here with two blasts of music/noise much to my enjoyment. It would go to figure that I like the more extreme acts on this CD, but there is a lot of music here and it gives you an idea of the local scene. All band addresses are included which is mandatory for a good compilation. If you're a fan of both punk and metal then there is something here for you to enjoy. (Bart)

Various Artists - Rest in Peace Compilation Vol. 1
C/o Vladimir Korolenko
P.O. Box 72
Smolensk-04
214004 Russia

Here we have a very interesting cassette compilation comprised of very obscure bands coming from Russia and beyond. With this comp, you get a wide variety of music mainly staying within the death/grind categories but also included is some doom and such. Every band on this compilation is at least decent, which shows the people over at Rest in Peace know how to pick 'em. Although each band is decent, there are those that stick out from the rest, and the first to do just that is Tales of Darknord with their black/death combination. Next we have brief tracks by Disabled and Melancholly Pessimism that go over well. Moving on to Maggots and then onto the doomy S.C.A.L.P. and finally onto the lengthy track by Moritura. This compilation features nineteen bands of which each is individual in their own worth. To any death/grind head I would advise contacting Rest in Peace Productions for their many killer obscurities and all their vital info. One irc or $1 will get you their list of merchandise and all the info you need, so go for it! (Jeff)

Various Artists – Rotted Head Meat Supply
P.O. Box 771
Mattoon, IL 61938

Do you like the most mind obliterating death/grind known to man? Then this compilation is for you. Each band is a thick wall of distorted riffs and machine like drumming. Bands that get my thumbs up are: Catasexual Urge Motivation (twisted samples and catchy yet crushing riffs/songs), Dismembered Fetus (strange mix of industrial feel with the wall of noise grind that I like), Slough (sick, ultra fast grind you can't help but like) and The Secret Life (another slightly industrial feel grind band that I dig). Bands that I'm not fond of are: Morgue Fetus (vocals are so deep but in front of the mix you lose everything else), Gonkulator (droning song that bores me), and Putrefaction (shitty mix/production). Bands that fall somewhere in between for me and fill up the rest of this tape comp are: Goreborg, Anal Getaway, Cyborgasm and Church Burner. Plenty of sick grind for those that are into this sort of thing. (Bart)

Venusian Death Cell – Natural Harmony / Reap Invert / Demo Deluxe
29 Whitechurch Hill
Ballyboden
Dublin 16
Ireland

When I talked to Jeff after giving him the demos of this project, he told me that he refused to review them. I found that odd, but after he played some of each of them for me, I understood why it was that he refused. This was self-labeled as a one-man death metal band, but I hear nothing of the sort. This is just repetitious bangs or knocks. This is more along the lines of ambient or noise rather than death metal. The thing is that all three tapes are like this, but only slightly different in sound or tempo. I thought maybe the tapes got accidentally X-rayed, and if so we'll get the proper reviews in the next issue. For now though, this is an extremely boring ambient project that I recommend to avoid. (Bart)

Voodoo Hippies – Demo Deluxe
113 N. Liberty St.
Jackson, TN 38301

Tough demo to get through for a couple of reasons. Some of the music is so similar to older Alice in Chains that it's annoying, but the second reason is that there is a song in here every so often that strays from the cloning. These songs are worth notice. They take on a heavier hardcore sound that is similar to a slow Jaww. The very first song "Fast Black" is one such song, and I wish the band would concentrate on this direction. They have something going there, but when they go the Alice in Chains route, I find myself losing interest quickly. The production is very good for a demo, and the demo is professionally packaged. It looks and sound sharp. Now if they could decide on the direction they want to go and stick with that, then they'll be on their way. (Bart)

Vorpal Bunny – Reign of the Lepus
C/o Lord Fur Productions
P.O. Box 21428
Columbia Heights, MN 55421

I get this feeling this band was initially just a joke band, and the music turned out pretty good so they decided to release it. Wide range of musical styles here, and I like them all. The first song is very fast death metal, with some incredibly fast but tight riffing. A drum machine is used, but I think it just adds to the coolness of this demo. The lyrics are quite humorous talking about how you better not fuck with the rabbits, or you're going to be in the shits. Halfway through the demo they shift to a black metal feel, and I'll be damned if it's not great stuff. Finally, there is a gabber techno song in here to mix things up, and it's just as cool as the rest of this demo. Don't let the silly band name fool you. There is a damn good music here, and I encourage to contact these bunnies immediately. (Bart)

Right from the get go, Martyr impressed me a great deal with its intelligently written, progressive, heavy metal and after a few listens, I was convinced that an interview was in line. This combination of part progressive, part melodic, part death and all powerfully executed metal is that of an odd one. When this is all meshed together with an array of talent, the result is both gratifying and original. I expect to hear a lot from this band in the future, and I expect their name to be rolling off many of your tongues as well. This Canadian band must not be missed. (Jeff)

Your promo sheet says that you guys started out in '91 playing cover songs. Tell us more about this (what kind of covers and such) and how the transition went from doing cover tunes to writing original material?

We began to play covers from Metallica, Megadeth, Slayer, then Forbidden, Testament, Sepultura, Coroner, and Annihilator. There was no drastic transition between covering and writing. We started writing from the beginning, but it was our first experience. We've always wanted to play our own material. With the '95 Ostrogoth demo, we left the covers behind us for good.

Tell us about your demos and promos that were recorded up until the release of your full-length album in '97, and how they compare to your newer material? Are any of those demo/promos still available?

Our first demo was entitled Alone with Conscience in '92-93 which included our six first songs, but it was not good enough to promote. The sound was awful too. Then in '94, we recorded an unreleased version of what should have been the Ostrogoth demo. The sound was not satisfying either, and the performance was not good enough. There are unreleased songs on it. Finally, in 1995, we recorded the final version of Ostrogoth demo. The sound, performance and choice of songs were quite good. This demo helped a lot to enter the underground market. The Hopeless Hopes CD is not comparable to the previous recordings. It has professional sound, good performance, and great songs. We've learned and practiced a lot before doing this one. Demo tapes are not available anymore. Maybe some day we'll do something with this.

Your bio also says that Martyr won some type of contest held by a local radio station. Tell us about that. How did it go, and what type of other bands were involved, etc?

The contest was settled on several evenings, each night presenting new bands to be judged while playing two or three songs. There were many different styles, from blues to black metal. It was interesting to hear so many styles in the same place. So, we won the "public choice" award. I think this was done by vote. I don't remember every detail. Anyway, we think that contests are not necessarily a good thing to do. It generates competitive spirit, and this is not good for music evolution. The musical goal should not be to win some stupid trophies, but to give people the chance to express themselves.

It seems to be rather difficult to label Martyr with one style or tag, although I've come to think of your music as heavy progressive metal. How do you categorize Martyr in terms of style of music? It seems like melody plays a big role in your music as well? And what were your musical intentions or goals when you formed Martyr eight years ago, and how have they changed today?

> *"Failure after failure, more than the heart can endure, Life becomes a slow torture, until the grand departure"*
> *From the song "Hopeless Hopes" which is on the album with the same title.*

Our style... I think we don't pay attention to this when we're writing, but after listening, I think we're doing a progressive technical death metal. We're not going into the grind and gore thing (nevertheless, if we need some elements out of it, we'll use it, like in "Ostrogoth" or "Ars Nova"). The goals we had in the beginning have not changed very much, except that we're more open-minded. We try many new things. New sounds that we dared not use before. Texts are much more philosophic and significant.

In the booklet to your CD before the actual lyrics being for each song there are a few lines in quotation that aren't sung. Tell us about this. Are these quotes taken from somewhere or is this like an intro to each song just for the reader or what? Why was this done? Also, what would you say the general theme is in your lyrics, and what is the meaning behind the title Hopeless Hopes?

It is an intro, some words to put the listener in the mood of the song before listening to it. It's not really meant to explain the lyrics, but it can help. The themes often use topics like anguish, oppression, affliction, and every emotion that refers to a martyr way of thinking. The meaning of "Hopeless Hopes" is that when you believe in a thing, and then you realize that you put so much faith in an illusion, you start to loose taste for life, and tends to be colder towards such things (it could be many things). But, if you stop to show desires, beliefs, hopes, then life is not worth living.

The musical ability is quite impressive, I was curious as to if any of the members have been professionally taught in music and so on?

Thank you! Every member studied music in college. Before that, we've been taught by private teachers.

Since there are brothers in the band (Daniel and Francois Mongrain), I was wondering if this would make writing music any more easy or difficult? Who writes most of the music, and how does the band go about making its music take form?

It doesn't makes much difference, except that we can easily show each other what we write. We have many common points in the optic of writing. Daniel writes most of the music. Pier-Luc and I are the secondary writers. I write most of the lyrics. Daniel is the secondary writer. Often, Daniel brings riffs or charts to the rehearsals, then we play it and find ideas around the structure. Sometimes, we think of a riff or a beat, then we jam to put a groove and elaborate on it.

I was also curious as to what bands have influenced you guys over the years? What are some of your musical idols?

François Mongrain: Cynic, Slayer, Fear Factory, Forbidden, Megadeth, Meshuggah, and Annihilator.
Daniel Mongrain: Death, U.K., Forbidden, Annihilator, Voivod, and Cynic.
Pier-Luc Lampron: Ozzy Osborne, Cynic, and Megadeth.
Patrice Hamelin: Slayer, Death, Tribal Tech, and Pantera.

The production on Hopeless Hopes was quite good I thought. Did Martyr release this album entirely on its own or did you have help from anyone? Since its release, have you had any label interest or anything like this?

We rented the equipment and recorded the album in our own basement! The recording was done by a good engineer and friend: Miguel Sanchez from Acid B. Rain production. We're now distributed through Relapse Records.

(interview continued on page 45)

There is always that one band that everyone remembers that you didn't care much for after hearing their album that first time. After a few more listens, you can't stop spinning the CD because it's so good. Such is the case for Mental Home for myself. It's diverse material and originality makes it a rarity in the scene today. This interview with Maiden was conducted via email. Check out what he had to say, and please check out the band's material. It's worth the effort, believe me on that... (Bart)

Hail! How have things been going with yourself and the band lately?

Hi! Here's Michael "Maiden" Smirnoff keyboard player and manager of Mental Home. I'm here to answer all questions.

The band is now looking forward to record the new material in October.

I was new to the band when I first heard Vale. I found it to be quite depressive doom, but still had a technical edge to the music. That is a rare combination I feel. Do you agree with that type of description of Mental Home's music, and how does the earlier material compare to Vale?

Well we always try to use our playing skills as well as our emotions. I think that emotional music (if it really reflects your feelings) is great. And if it is well played it is much better!

As for the earlier material, it's not as complicated as Vale. We have two albums before Vale: Funeral Service ('94) and Mirrorland ('95). The first one is pretty much death/doom stuff while Mirrorland is dynamic, melodic and easy to get into material. We love both releases, and The End Records plans to release them as a split CD in the near future.

Mental Home's music is quite hard to classify, but I have found one band that is similar to your sound. Have you heard of On Thorns I Lay (they are on Holy Records), and do you agree at all with this comparison?

Yes I've heard On Thorns I Lay, but I never thought we sounded similar. Through almost all our existence we've been compared to Tiamat. We do not deny their influence, but it wasn't the main influence for us. There were many so it's hard to tell which one was the most important.

We love classical music, and if you listen to our albums you will surely see that keyboards are mostly influenced by classical.

Apparently Mental Home is very successful in Russia, but I haven't heard of the band until just recently. How well has Vale sold there in Russia? How frustrating is it getting the name out to rest of the world? I think that The End Records opening up a U.S. office is definitely a positive step for the band as well as the label.

Our most successful album (read sold most) is Mirrorland. It's sold in about 10,000 copies. Vale is around 6,000. When the Vale was just released, we took #1 in the Russian Metal Charts. But we think that Black Art will show people the best points of our band. With the help of The End Records, we are getting known in various places by various people, bands, zines, labels. We are grateful to The End Records for such wide promotion. Previously, we had to do everything by ourselves. Sending promos, spreading flyers. We did it all. Strange that you haven't heard of us before. We did a very extensive job of getting the band's name out.

Now we receive many interviews, questions from fans and offers for distribution. We also get played on the radio stations.

Did you feel comfortable signing to The End Records seeing how they are located in the U.S? What is your impression of the label so far? Living here in the states, I can tell you that they are doing quite a bit of promotion for their releases. Also, do you feel comfortable that they have signed quite a few bands so fast?

We are absolutely satisfied with The End Records. We are being handled and treated like musicians. Our previous label was interested in making money off us without caring about the band. The End Records are making big business and doing a great job. They promote us so widely that we have simply no places left to send promos to. Yes, they signed a few more bands, and we are proud we are on the same label with those. It's not a problem but an advantage! The more known The End Records becomes the more people will know us and other bands. I will tell you more. It was I who brought Nokturnal Mortum to The End Records.

We signed with them not because we had no choice, but because we're just one team with them. That's the point.

I went on your web site and downloaded some samples from your new album Black Art. From what I heard, it is still definitely Mental Home. How do you think the band has progressed since Vale? When do you think Black Art will be released?

Now we have different style lyrics, because all previous lyrics were written by Roman Povarov (guitar and later keyboards) whom I replaced. His lyrics were totally different. He wrote abstract emotional and mystical lyrics, while mine are of anti-Christian nature and dark philosophy. I write all songs based on my own attitude in real life. So the lyrics of Black Art reflect my sorrow over the lost Pagan culture in Russia and some philosophical lyrics. The song, "Plague Omen", reflects the theory that the Hale-Bopp comet that visits Earth once every 2,000 years could be the Bethlehem star that was the sign of Christ's birth. Many ask themselves, was the visit of Hale-Bopp comet in Spring '97 the second coming of Christ?

Musically there's a huge progress because we paid a lot of attention to the sound production. We also spent a lot of time setting up the desired sound for each instrument. Also I'd like to mention that this time we used ESP custom guitars and VOX tube amps that improved sound considerably. Plus we matured as arrangers, which made our songs sound more professional.

> "Black Art is more of an art, more straight and evil...and sorrowful."

As for the release date, you may visit The End Records internet page and read some info there. Sure thing is that Black Art will be out in summer. We had some difficulties with fitting the title picture onto the cover, and that caused delays (funny problem, huh?). But now we are done with the layouts, and the process is on the way.

From what I heard of Black Art, it sounded a bit faster overall tempo wise, and had a stronger reliance on the keyboards. Also, I found the songs on Black Art a bit more catchy, where on Vale they took a few listens for them to completely sink in before I really liked them. Do you agree/disagree with these statements?

Songs on Black Art are filled with various keyboards. We arranged the keys with much attention, and on some songs we've got up to seven different keyboard parts. If you get into Black Art songs faster than into Vale's, it can be explained by the more obvious and easy melody lines on Black Art. Vale is depressive one, hard to get into and even harder to get out of. Black Art is more of an art, more straight, evil and sorrowful.

How often does the band get to play live, and what size of crowd do you normally play in front of? What's the largest crowd you've ever played in front of? Have you done any tours, and who did you do them with?

We play a gig about once every two months. We don't wanna overload our fans with performances. While in the US, the more you play the more famous you become, here we cannot accept that scheme. There are so many different gigs in Moscow every week that people are just tired of them and do not go to most of the gigs. So

the less often you play, the more people come. We play other cities and there are many fans hungry for music. There we can gather 1,000 fans or so. In Moscow you are the "King of the Kings" if you gather 500 fans at your gig.

Soon we will play in Minsk (Belorussia) at the Extremum '98 fest together with Lux Occulta, Christ Agony, Hate (all from Poland), Gods Tower, Vicious Crusade, Apraxia (all from Belorussia), Neglected Fields (Latvia) and Sorrowful God (Russia). It will be the whole day open air festival. I think that gig is going to be the biggest in our history. A few thousand people will surely come to see the action.

Up till now we haven't had any gigs with well known bands except for Dementor (Slovakia) and Nokturnal Mortum (Ukraine, they gonna be big very soon, man!)

I just got my hands on a bunch of Russian demo level bands. What bands from Russia do you really think are worth checking out? Two bands Grenouer and Bestial Deform were ones that I particularly liked. Do you know of these bands, and what is your opinion of them?

Worth a listen are Thron' (those guys abandoned their home country of Kazakhstan to move to Moscow and play the music they wanted), Autumnal Discord (melodic doom with male and female vocals), Nokturnal Mortum (future godz, Nuclear Blast got license for them for Europe), Lucifugum (orthodox of Slavonic black metal), Sermon (post-black highly talented band), Forgive-Me-Not (metal wave, not dark, not evil but brilliant and hyper melodic!!!).

I know Grenouer, they hail from Perm and play death metal. I have got their tape, and I cannot say I like them a lot. They are just one of many death metal bands around. As for Bestial Deform, I know them but haven't got their tape and thus cannot tell you much about their music. As far as I remember they are death metal also. If you like death metal, I want to recommend you to listen to Merlin. They are a Moscow death metal band with female vocals. Oh man, you cannot even imagine how brutal the voice of that lady is. There are rumors that Trey Azagthoth loved their demo.

Are any of the band members involved with other musical projects or does Mental Home take all of your time? What do the members of Mental Home do outside of the band?

Well only our lead guitar player Sergey Kalachov helps various bands as a session guitarist. Others are dedicated to Mental Home only. It consumes all our possible and impossible time and life resources.

Outside of the band, Sergey Dmitriev (guitar/vocals) is a composer once again for Mental Home. He's just all into his music. His elder brother Igor works at Nike sports company. Our bass player Denis Samusev works at the CD-pressing plant outside of Moscow. And I work for GlasNet (www.glasnet.ru, Internet Service provider) that provided my e-mail address and host my web site.

For fun we all listen to music, relax in the outdoors outside of Moscow (in the forest), sleep (sometimes you need it badly). Well I (as a band manager) can hardly allow myself sleeping more than 5-6 hours a day (sometimes less) and all my free time I spend visiting magazines, labels, making ad's here and there. Too many things left to be done (few more interviews too, he-he).

I saw that the members of Mental Home were in bands previously? Who was involved with what bands, and what kind of music was each band? Are any of these former bands still together?

Brothers Dmitriev were involved in many bands (Mylady, Verwolf, etc.) and played various styles from thrash to black metal. Denis hardly played in any band before, but he loves brutal stuff like Incantation and Obituary alongside with such melodic one as Dream Theater. Sergey Kalachov was a guitar roadie for some heavy bands few years ago and dreamed of playing in a serious band. I played in some absolutely unknown bands styled from thrash to doom.

None of those bands exist at the moment. Verwolf simply transformed into Mental Home by changing style, name and replacing bass player to Denis. Other bands died years ago.

Does the band have its previous albums still for sale anywhere? Does the band have T-shirts for sale? Also, what does the future hold for Mental Home?

Yes, our first and second albums are still on sale in Russia, and I also know that Cursed Prod. distributes it in the U.S. as well. Our Funeral Service album is mostly being sold in Russia, but there are some foreign orders coming from time to time. Mirrorland is the most famous, and it's still selling very well!

As I already told you above we plan to: play at Extremum '98 fest in Minsk and then prepare ourselves for the recording of the new album (follow up to Black Art) which will take place in October '98.

I look forward to hearing Black Art when it is unleashed upon the world. Thank you for doing this interview, and do you have anything to say to complete this interview?

We are extremely sorry for delays with answering your interview. Shit happens ya know. Thank you for patience and support! To all our fans, contact us. We will be glad to hear from you wherever you are!

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(Martyr interview continued from page 43)

It's been made clear in your bio that Martyr plays live a lot. Have you completed any tours and/or have plans for upcoming tours? Will Martyr be playing this year's Milwaukee Metal Fest? I thought I saw your name on the flyer. Also, how much have you played in the U.S.?

We did play a lot in Quebec, but now it is the time to look bigger. We're planning an Europe and US tour, maybe next year. We'll play at Milwaukee Metal Fest on Saturday July 25th. It will be our first time in the US.

What are Martyr's immediate plans for the future? And when do you see the band releasing its next release?

We're in the writing process for the next release set for fall 1999. For now, our plan is that people can hear our music, so to be distributed and get a record deal.

I guess we've come to the end here. Give us your closing comments and also tell our readers one last time why they should check out the complex music of Martyr. Also list all available merchandise and prices and where from, or if there's anything else you wanted to mention, feel free to do so. Thanks!

Well, thanks for your time. I hope all of you will be able to see us live at Milwaukee Metal Fest. But before, go get a copy of our CD and learn our songs! (And enjoy it!). Contact us or check our web site for our merchandise list and prices. The Hopeless Hopes CD is available through Relapse Records.

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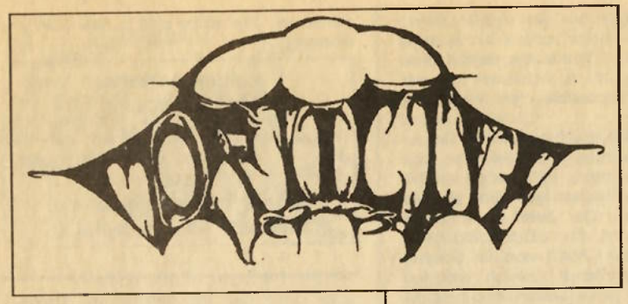


Political grind bands have always had a soft place for me, and when I heard Morticite, I knew I had to feature these guys in Intellektual Spew. Steve didn't really say much in this interview, but believe me when I say that their music speaks volumes. Read on to see what Steve had to say...(Bart)

How's it going Steve? I know that Morticite has been around for a while now. What material has Morticite released up to this date? What material are you most fond of and least fond of and why?

Hello! Morticite has been around since May '92. We've released the Nations of the Plague demo, Infested Commercialism demo, split 7" with Drogheda, Extremist Records comp CD volumes I and II, Abstract promo and Right of Insubordination demo. I'm the most fond of this demo, because it's the most current and sounds more like we do now.

What does Morticite mean, and does it have anything to do with the political stance you take with the lyrics? Who writes the lyrics? Touch on some of the topics you cover with your lyrics and your take on them. Which ones are most important to you?

Morticite's name doesn't coincide with our lyrics. Cedric Cox (bassist) and I write the lyrics about things we encounter everyday and stuff that's important to us. We write about topics like racism, voting, cops, conformity, welfare and taxes to name a few. All lyrics mean a lot to me.

I know that a member of your band is black. Have you encountered any bullshit racism because of this? Why do you think race relations are still such a huge problem here in the states today?

We encounter some racism, but most steer away from us. Racism is still a huge problem. People just hide their feelings nowadays more than before.

The Ohio scene has been quite busy with lots of underground bands the past few years. Why do you think that is, and what bands do you personal like and are good friends with?

I'm not sure why that is, but I don't think there's a lot left that are great. The ones I like: Estuary of Calamity, Drogheda, Counterpoise, and Thorns of the Carrion.

Your brand of grind has some intricate riffing at times. Is it tough to pull off live? Do you like playing live, and what are some good shows that you've been to personally?

It's not any harder to pull our riffs off live. We record live. We love to play live. Some memorable times were with Cannibal Corpse, Grave, the punk fest in '95, shows with locals, Drogheda, the Illnoize metal fest and so on.

Has the band ever been on any tours, or have you just played around locally? If you could set up your perfect tour, who would you take along with you?

We've never toured, but we've gone out of state a few times. The perfect tour would be with Estuary of Calamity, Drogheda, and Groinchurn.

I could see your band's music finding fans in both the metal and punk scenes. Is this true, and why do you think there is always a rift between the metal and punk scenes?

We do have fans in both scenes, but it brings them together instead of pulling each other apart.

Have you had any label interest thus far? Do you think you'd want to sign to any of the "larger" underground labels? Would there be any labels you would or would not sign with and why?

No label interest so far. We'd have to look into any label closely before signing our lives away. I don't know if any are better or worse.

Has the band been working on new material, and when do you think you might release it to the underground? How does the material compare to your older material?

We're always working on new material. We're not sure when we'll release it. We may record this summer. Our new material is definitely more technical, and we keep expanding our style to be more original and extreme.

If there was one album that you would say everyone should have, what would it be and why? Also, what is one band that they should see live and why?

One album would have to be the first Black Sabbath album, because that's where a lot of music came from. One band to see live would have to be Brutal Truth, because they are so fucking intense live.

I can't think of much else to ask, so finish up this interview letting everyone know what you have for sale. Thanks for interview.

Thanks a lot for the interview. Everyone write for more info.

Mailing Address:
Morticite
C/o Steve Eberl
322 Pike St.
Reading, OH 45215

Bart's Current Listening Selection:

1. Entropy – Tangled Human Complex
2. Götterdämmerung – Sturmgott
3. Mental Home – Black Art
4. Unlord – Schwarswald
5. Therapy? – Infernal Love
6. Misfits – Coffin Box Cd's
7. Dead Kennedys – Frankenchrist
8. Skinned – Split of Sickness
9. Dying Fetus – Killing on Adrenaline
10. Aeturnus - ...And So the Night Became

Jeff's Current Listening Selection:

1. Epoch of Unlight – What Will Be Has Been
2. Absu – In the Eyes of Ioldánach
3. Children of Bodom – Something Wild
4. Doomstone – Church of Nightmares
5. Bal-Sagoth – Battle Magic
6. The Haunted – The Haunted
7. Aeturnus - ...And So the Night Became
8. October 31 – Visions of the End
9. Nocturnal Rites – In a Time of Blood and Fire
10. Manowar – Hail to England

Inner V.O.I.D. Hard Music Journal Issue #2 out now. 50 pgs. On news print, glossy cover. Interviews with Broken Hope, Stuck Mojo, Regurgitation, One Life Crew, Crush Effect, Fleshtized, Lunatic, In Flames, Compression, Out Cold and Pissed Midgets. Plus demo, album and show reviews. Tons of underground contacts and radio listings. Only $3 also #1 still available: Pro-Pain, V.o.D., Deaden, Pessimist, Angelkill, etc. $3 or $5 for both issues to: P.O. Box 975, Dickson, TN 37055

With Greece's Odes of Ecstasy EP, you need time and a clear mind to take everything in, because within their music lies seemingly a whole other world of inventiveness and rich swaying beauty in shadows of darkness. All this group of individuals has to offer can't be taken in within just one sitting. Subsequent inquires are needed, and then you do receive their massive talents in all their darkened and brilliant glory. An impressive act for exceptional ears. With a little effort, you too can witness this spectacle of delights. Here is Dimitris to further convince you to do just that.. (Jeff)

Since I'm not very familiar with the band, could you give us the history behind Odes of Ecstasy? Also, please introduce yourself and each member of the band and what his or her role is?

The band was formed in November of 1993. Our first release was the promo '95, and in 1996 we released our first official demo. In 1997, we recorded just one song in order to send it to some record companies, and we finally signed with The End Records. The line-up of the band is:
Nikos Baltas: guitar
Dimitris Bikos: guitar-vocals
Christina Maniati: vocals
Joseph Nikou: bass
Nikos Simigiannis: drums
Irini Tsiklou: keyboards

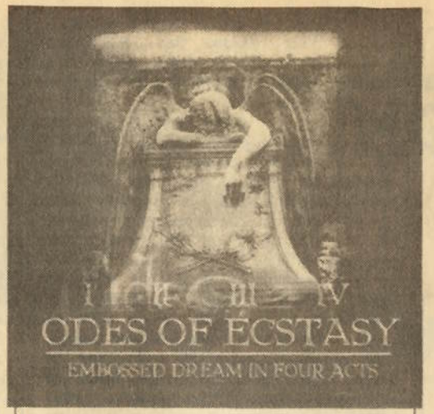
What all has been released up until Embossed Dreams in Four Acts, and is any of this part material still available? If so, how and where can it be obtained?

As I said, our first release was the promo '95 which has only one song called "Theogony". The reason of this recording was only to gain some experience from being in the studio. This song isn't available any more. The next release was the demo Atheistic Emotions which includes five songs (one of them is a cover of Black Sabbath's "Paranoid"). Most of the reviews it took were very good, but we are not totally satisfied from the production. This release is still available and costs 5$. It can be ordered from the band's address. Then, one year later, we recorded the promo '97, which has the song "Words Of Insanity." This tape was named as the demo of the month in the Greek Metal Hammer mag, and it can be obtained by sending a tape and 1$ (for postage and package) to the band's address.

I found it difficult to place Odes of Ecstasy within any one particular style of music. How would you classify or describe your music, and what type of music was it that you set out to create in the beginning?

I agree with you that it isn't easy to characterize our sound, because we are influenced from many kinds of music. Even I don't like to classify any band's music, if I had to describe our sound to someone that doesn't know us, I would say that we play atmospheric symphonic metal with operatic and brutal death vocals. From the beginning, we wanted to have the sound we have now, but we weren't as capable in achieving this as we are now. I believe that in the future we'll have elements from even more kinds of music.

Since your music is quite complex, I was curious as to how you as a band go about creating your music? Also, it seems as if synth and keyboard play a big role within your music, would you say this is true and exactly how important a factor is this element(s)?



Firstly, the other guitar player (Nikos B.) or I compose some riffs. Then we rehearse just the two of us in order to finish the basic parts of the song. After that, we rehearse with our drummer (Nikos S.) and our bass player (Joseph), and they decide what to play. If anyone has a different idea for an exact part of the song, we try it and see what fits best. Many songs have changed a lot during these rehearsals. The next step is to tell our keyboard player what to play, but if she has any ideas, then she is more than welcome. Finally we write the lyrics and we decide how they are going to be sung. The synths are very important to our music, because we don't have the money to record real violins, piano, cello, e.t.c. So we are obliged to use the synths instead of these instruments.

The mood of Embossed Dream is quite dark and eerie. Is this something you're out to achieve, and what exactly are the band's intentions as far as obtaining a certain feel or mood?

Our only intention is to express our most intense emotions through our music.

The basic elements of metal are very much present in your music, that being guitar, bass and drums along with the use of deep and almost black type vocals. Where did the inspiration come from to combine the styles of metal with that of a classical nature along with experimentation?

We did that combination because we love these two music styles. Of course metal is our favorite kind of music, but we are into classical music too. Many people think that these two styles are totally different, but I believe that there are a lot of bands that have mixed them in their songs very well. Therion is a great example.

At times it almost sounds as if you were using a drum machine while at other times it sounds more like a human drummer. Do you use a human drummer or is it done with a machine, or do you combine the two? With six members, I would assume you would have a full-time drummer.

We do have a drummer (Nikos Simigiannis). The strange sound you heard was because the studio we recorded was new, and it didn't have ordinary drums. Instead it had practice drums (they look like the electronic drums), and they were connected with a machine that has various sounds of drums. Because of the small size of the drum kit, it wasn't easy for Nikos to get used to them. So if he was making any mistakes, we were fixing them from the computer. The reason of all these was again the lack of money. Nikos is an excellent drummer and during our rehearsals, he is playing far better from what you hear in the CD.

What are some of the artists, bands, musicians, etc. that the members of Odes of Ecstasy enjoy and listen to?

We listen to all genres of metal. Some of our favorite bands are Megadeth, Therion, Blind Guardian, Dream Theater, Rotting Christ, Septic Flesh, Black Sabbath, Bathory, e.t.c.

Is classical music a big inspiration for the band, and what within this (classical) type of music do you enjoy?

I think that the many elements of classical music we have in our CD are proving that we are influenced by it. What I enjoy most in this style is the special sound of the harmonic minor scale which is used in many classical songs. In metal and in rock in general, the most common minor scale is the natural, but the harmonic minor of classical music has a more sad and oriental sound.

So tell us about Embossed Dreams in Four Acts. What is the general idea of this release and such? Also, about the "Epilogos – Vampire Hunter", I see someone wrote the music for this particular track, please tell us about this and especially tell us about your use of samples from Francis Ford Coppola's Dracula as well?

If someone reads the title of the CD, without reading the lyrics, he will assume that this is a concept album, but this isn't true. There isn't any story in four parts. What is happening is that all the songs have the same topic. They are referring to life, death and religion through an atheistic point of view. "Vampire Hunters" is a cover of one of the songs which were written from Wojiech Kilar for the Francis Ford Coppola's film Dracula. We used a lot of synths for this song, and we added some unusual drum sounds in order to make the song sound "heavier" from the original version. We also added some dialogues from the movie and an electric guitar with a weird distorted sound.

I was particularly moved by your operatic like female vocals, and how these work so well within your music. Are these the vocals of one or both female members of your band? Tell us more about this. Are these women trained as vocalists, and how do the vocal lines fit into your writing process? I found these vocals to be unlike any I've heard before.

Actually only one singer sung them, Christina Maniati. In many songs you can hear at the same time more than one female voices, but this was achieved by using several recording tracks in the studio. Christina has taken lessons in order to train her voice and she is specialized in soul music, but she has a

(interview continued on page 58)

Pessimist

Joe of Acid Enema was planning on starting a 'zine of his own, but after some financial problems had to decide to not do the 'zine after all. I was talking to him online, and he approached me with the idea of featuring these guys in my zine. I thought Pessimist were a great band, so I obviously agreed to it. The interview is a bit dated, but the info is still there. Here's the interview he did with this great death metal band... (Bart)

So, what are you guys up to these days?

Well, we just got back from a show in Peoria, IL. We played out there with Fleshgrind, Corpse Vomit, Lividity, and Hot Stove. In January, we are playing in New York with Insatanity. We just opened for Deicide here in Baltimore last week, that was killer! We have another show coming up in February with Deceased and Internal Bleeding. Other than that, we have been busy promoting our new CD Cult of the Initiated and writing material for our next CD.

You just recently came out with your debut CD on Lost Disciple Records. How does this release differ from past Pessimist material?

Cult... is a lot more cohesive as far as us writing together as a band. The songs are stronger and somewhat more technical and definitely more brutal than our past releases. Of course we have also been progressing as musicians, and the skill level on this CD is far superior to our older recordings as well.

> "This great nation once meant freedom, now it's run by thieves. No escape from their corruption, Nowhere we can hide."
> Taken from "The Stench of Decay" from the album Cult of the Initiated

How has Lost Disciple Records been to you, given that the label is just in it's infancy?

Lost Disciple has been treating us great, Rich is just a totally cool guy. He supports Pessimist 100%! He has gotten us tons of killer distribution overseas, as well as airplay, reviews, interviews, and ads in all the larger zines. He's working on getting us on some of the larger death fests this year. We will also be featured on a new comp CD coming out on Lost Disciple called Visionaries of the Macabre. It will include previously unreleased tracks from us as well as Cryptopsy, Oppressor, Acheron, and others.

Your music is very brutal and dark. While this is true for all death metal, few succeed at innovative ideas. Your music has the core elements of death metal, yet plenty of originality. How do you achieve this?

I have never tried to copy anybody else's style. All my music I write from inside. It's mostly based on ideas I have about music in general. I like to experiment with different music theories, more like a science of modes, scales, and rhythms. I have some classical training on guitar, so that has always helped in my approach to songwriting.

Like I said in the question before, your music is extremely refreshing to death metal, but there are hints of influences from other bands. Who influences your music?

Most of our influence comes from the early black/death/thrash bands like Destruction, Possessed, Kreator, and Slayer. We mix this with the modern brutality of bands like Incantation, Immolation, Suffocation, Gorguts, and Sinister.

How has Cult of the Initiated been received overseas, if at all? And how is it doing over here in the states?

The reception has been overwhelming, much greater than even I expected. Overseas I know that it's really starting to attract some attention, and we have some good distribution in Spain, Germany, and the Netherlands. Here in the states it has really taken off. Every review has been absolutely killer. We have been receiving nothing but praise. There is a radio show at a station in Calgary, Canada called "Skull Session" that just voted our CD as the #2 Death Metal album of the Year!! So, we are pleased with the response that we are getting, and looking forward to our next release,

You guys have obviously been busy doing shows in and around your place of residence. Who have you been performing with?

As far as nationals, we have played with Deicide, Suffocation, Incantation, Broken Hope, Monstrosity, Vader, Malevolent Creation, Napalm Death, At The Gates, Testament and Forbidden. Some of our other favorite locals to do shows with are Dying Fetus, Horror Of Horrors, Insatanity, and Garden Of Shadows to name a few.

Any upcoming tours to look out for? Also, for us on the west coast, are you planning any shows out here?

We are currently negotiating an offer from a booking agency. If that goes through we will be playing a lot more shows up and down the East Coast, and possibly even some Canada dates, but there are no concrete tour plans as of yet.

Every band usually has a great story or two that happened when they were touring. Any good ones from your last tour?

Not really, since we haven't officially toured yet! Of course I could share some horror stories from the road traveling to out of state gigs, but it's mostly the usual stuff. Speeding tickets, equipment problems, etc.

How do you guys feel about all the press you are receiving, and how you guys just seem to have risen up overnight? Is it overwhelming?

We have worked very hard for a long time to get where we are, so for us it doesn't seem so overnight. We are pleased at all the positive responses and support we have been receiving. We feel that we are finally getting some of the recognition that we deserve. And the media response, yes it has been somewhat overwhelming. Things are really starting to take off for us! Our popularity has increased more rapidly in the past six months than the two whole years before that. I think that it is largely due to just getting our name out there on a much larger scale now that our CD is out, through advertising, distribution, airplay, reviews, interviews, and continuing to network the underground.

Your current CD is pretty fuckin' brutal, what can we expect with future Pessimist releases? Are you going to keep your brutal style, or will you venture off into more experimentation?

With the next Pessimist release you can expect nothing short of sheer brutality. We have totally accelerated our style. Everything is much more extreme now. Our style now is refined, and even more complex, darker, and more evil, yet we still have that trademark Pessimist sound. There will also be some experimentation, but we're keeping that a surprise. Also expect a much higher quality recording and packaging. This album will place us among the death metal elite.

Are you guys planning on making Lost Disciple your home for the foreseeable future?

Definitely.

Anything you guys would like to add?

Yeah, keep an eye out for that new comp CD coming out on Lost Disciple called Visionaries of the Macabre, featuring previously unreleased tracks from Pessimist, Cryptopsy, Oppressor, Acheron, Aurora Borealis, and others. It should be available by the time you read this. Check out our web site. We have killer live photos, sound files, live chat, CD/merch order info, reviews, and tons of links to bands, labels, and zines in the underground. Thanks a lot for the cool interview!

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Vinyl Spew

Abscess – Throbbing Black Werebeast
Relapse Records
Gotta thank Pellet for hooking me up with this for radio, so I thought I'd get this reviewed in here as well. This 7" is seven great tracks of classic Abscess. If you've liked them in the past then you'll dig this, and if not...well, you still won't like them. Raw punkish death metal with sick lyrics is what you get from Abscess. Bad news for Abscess is that they just got dropped by Relapse. Someone's gotta pay for that discretion. Pick this up while Abscess sorts out getting on a new label. (Bart)

Booby Hatch – Hip Shaking Asscore
House O' Pain
Crusty hardcore that I like a lot. Boobie Hatch got an interview in this issue so check it out if you haven't already then check out this six song 7". The sound is pretty good, and these tracks will have most crowds acting violently in no time flat. The screamed vocals of Eric are quite effective, and are even better live when he's falling all over the stage. This material is the best Booby Hatch has put out to date. (Bart)

Covenant – Nexus Polaris
Nuclear Blast
After a mediocre first attempt, a freshly regrouped and revived Covenant return, backed by a new label to bring us their second greatly prolific offering. The Covenant of 1998 comes forth bringing with it new life, for joining original members Blackheart and Nagash are Sverd, Astennu and veteran Hellhammer to round out the cosmic equation. This quintet has forged a new identity for our eager ears to revel in, casting aside any notion of other involvement of each individual. Covenant seems to have been reborn, for they go about their way far astride the current flow of things. Nexus Polaris has an overwhelming aura of class about it, and a radiation of sharp darkness lying just out of sight. This album goes far beyond any category, amiss any comparison. The music is layered with brilliant solid riffing, possessing many progressive qualities within its sharp melodies and galloping rhythms. Many elements contribute to this album's greatness, such as the female operatic vocals that accompany the rich, sinister synth work, fronted by lively vocals which remain interesting throughout, being devilishly high at one point, only to fall deep in the next. The band take a near poetic approach in its cosmicly minded lyrical stand point, seeming to convey this through their musical workings as well somehow. This highly original musical offering is finally wrapped in an equally excellent package with cover art supplied by veteran underground artist Andreas Marschall. Somehow this musical experience seems heightened by it being on vinyl format, having more of a visual aspect to focus on while in complete awe. Grimly beautiful and truly awesome! (Jeff)

Distress / Mind – Split 7"
Resuscitate Records
I got this just as #4 of I.S. 'zine came out so this has had to wait a good long while before getting reviewed for all to see. This is a great 7" so it was well worth the wait. Distress start off with some punk/crust/hardcore that kinda reminds me of earlier Napalm Death but slowed down some. This 7" is played 45 rpm so it goes pretty quick. Mind is on the opposite side, but is also along the same lines musically. Both bands remind me of the godly Nasum as well. Nice layout on the inside as well. Has some interesting pictures and not just a typical lyric sheet or thanks list. This comes very recommended. (Bart)

The Earwigs / Lord Zillablaster – Split 7"
Be A Freak Records
Whoo hooo!! Noise!! I popped this piss colored 7" on my turntable, and the Earwigs went about abusing my speakers. They don't pick things up though until about halfway through though, and that is when it gets harsh and at its best. This has a futuristic sound to it like they brag of, but still resorts to the mind numb barrages that I like to hear from noise. Lord Zillablaster gets up and pulls off his chaotic mix of noise with some metal riffing in the background. The sound production drops dramatically for part of this side though, and I kinda wonder if he wanted it that way. Nice mix of metal and harsh electronics though. Noise freaks will want to seek this out. (Bart)

Enemy Soil / Reversal of Man – Split 7"
Fist Held High
Nice looking split 7" here. Enemy Soil who are now with Relapse Records I believe are up first, and they crank out some cool crusty grind that I like quite a bit. The songs of aggression are over before you realize it though. Up next is the mighty Reversal of Man. I got this actual 7" from the band when they played locally, and they are consistent with this release in that it's some great hardcore/crust/grind ruckus. Both sides rock here, and considering the addition of the slick looking cover this is well worth your hard earned dollars. (Bart)

Entropy – s/t
ETY Records
This 7" is a bit more grind oriented compared to their demo that I reviewed in this issue as well. In fact, lovers of bands like Agraphobic Nosebleed and more controlled Anal Cunt will probably love this. There is still a touch of punk with this release, but it's no where near as evident as it is on the tape. Six songs total, and they all blast along merrily much to my happiness. Great stuff here. Get all of Entropy's material. It rules. (Bart)

Jaww – 7"
1576 Queen Street W. #30
Toronto, ON Canada
M6R 1A6
Coolies...new Jaww material. I am a huge fan of their Southbound album, and when I got to see Jaww live, Doug threw this my way. This material does show some growth musically. They still play that rocking mix of death metal and hardcore, but now seem to be doing more musically. Some of the riffs again are simply catchy as hell and must be played a million times to satiate that needed fix. Great stuff. The band is now on a Canadian label, and I hope to see them get some decent U.S. distribution so they can get the respect they deserve. Get this now. (Bart)

DISTRESS

Nunslaughter / Dekapitator
Midnight 666 Records
I'm not positive this is released by Midnight since I got it from Don of Nunslaughter, but I'm pretty sure it is. Nunslaughter is back with their brand of raw Morbid Angel like death metal. I've always liked what I've heard of this band, and now that they are signed to Repulse Records, things are looking up for the band. Dekapitator are more of a retro-thrash type band. They do a great job for what they do although it is nothing spectacular. Still a great 7" and well worth finding this and adding it to your vinyl collection. (Bart)

Plan – s/t
Widerstand Records
I don't get the point to be honest. Filling a noise 7" with lock grooves so that no matter where you place the needle it skips on purpose. The noise sounds promising, but too bad I only get about five seconds of it before it starts to skip. Annoying. (Bart)

Reversal of Man – Revolution Summer
Great 10" here that I picked up when I saw Reversal of Man live with Assück. The politically charged lyrics are spat forth in a most convincing manner even if they do that shriek at times that gets on my nerves. The music is crushing hardcore/crust though that I enjoy a great deal. The band is quite energetic live, and any band that writes a song about the Earth Crisis loser clones has to rank up there in my book. Plenty of great music here, and the booklet inside makes for an interesting read to boot. Delightfully hostile. (Bart)

Great grind bands, like Rotten Sound, are something I never can seem to get enough of, and this band just hit the spot for me. I sent this email interview to Bagge Keigo, and it took a while to get back from him. I found out that he was on vacation, and that explained the delay. I'm very happy now to be presenting a great grind band like Rotten Sound in our pages. Read on to see what was said... (Bart)

How is it going man? I hope this interview find you and the band in good spirits. Let's start off by some comparisons I've been hearing. What's it like being compared to one of the great grind bands Terrorizer? I've seen many zines doing it lately for your album Under Pressure?

It's quite cool to be compared to such great band. Hopefully those 'zines have also been able to find something of our own while they compare us to Terrorizer. I also hope that some cool grind band in year 2008 will be compared to Rotten Sound.

I have found that most countries in Europe are known for one style of metal. Czech Republic is known for crushing death metal, while Norway is known for wicked black metal. I know I'm generalizing, but just play along. Finland though is like America with a wider range of great bands. Why do you think that is?

Is it really? I haven't noticed. At least we should not have anything in common culturally. One reason might be the really huge admiration towards the States around here. Almost all of our shops, restaurants and bars are written in English (or American). Our television programs are at least 50% produced in U.S.A. My point of view is that Finnish bands scratch a bit from all countries around because we are so much influenced by you guys. It's quite obvious that we remind a bit of America.

Rotten Sound has put out quite a few releases here and there before the release of Under Pressure. I'm going to list them and I'd like your thoughts on each: Sick Bastard, Psychotic Veterinarian, Loosing Face, and anything else I might have missed.

The Sick Bastard EP was our first release that was initially made as a demo after two or three weeks of the forming of Rotten Sound. Genet records wanted to press it on vinyl, and we went with the idea quite easily because it's quite cool to have the first release pressed right away. The music on that one quite close to E.N.T. and Doom and also the members playing on that one were more crust and HC oriented than today's line-up. I guess that Mika might have some copies of this left.

Psychotic Veterinarian was also recorded as a demo. The recordings were made during Vomiturition's A Leftover CD studio session in a big hurry (everything, including my vocals, were recorded live) and that is the greatest thing in this one. It's a really raw and furious release. S.O.A. records wanted to make it as MCD, and again we wouldn't like to say no. The MCD has sold all of it's copies, but S.O.A. has been babbling something about 7" EP version of Psychotic Veterinarian. Hopefully he will make it.

The Loosin' Face 10" picture vinyl was produced by German Anomie records. The music in this is quite nice, but my vocals really suck (they are also mixed too low). I had a huge throat ache during the recording (1½ days, self-financed recording) and I really could not do my best. That is the main reason why we made the best songs (9 of them) on Under Pressure much tighter and with million times better vocals. Mika has also some copies of this left.

We have also did Splitted Alive Split-EP with Control Mechanism, which contains two songs ("Vicious Circle" and "Apart"). Now we have just recorded three new songs for another split-EP (with Unholy Grave (JPN)) and our side will be called "Coldvenience". The new songs are quite good, but the recording sucks. We tried to make much better that we can do in a one day. Perhaps it should have been made with the same mentality as Psychotic Veterinarian to make those songs work. I think that at least two of those songs will be on our next full length.

"Your mind is filled with hate, And hate breeds useless rage, You think you are great, When you have lost your fate... Controlled Mind!!"
Taken from "Controlled Mind" off the album Under Pressure

What is the lyrical content of Rotten Sound like? I have noticed that most crust/grind bands tend to stick to more realistic, political, or environmental topics instead of going for the fantasy gore genre. Does this apply to Rotten Sound?

It does and it does not. It depends so strongly on the song (and the writer of the lyrics). Jorma (our ex-bassist) writes more political lyrics, and I write more depressive ones (with some exceptions).

How did the band members come together to form Rotten Sound? It lists Mika like he was the sole beginning of the band, but it never says when the current members came into Rotten Sound. Has the line-up for Rotten Sound stayed pretty steady through the years?

I came into the band in the start with Ville (Drums) and Masa (Bass). Ville and Masa left after about one year, and they were replaced by Kai and Jorma. Jorma was brutally kicked out just before Loosin' Face recordings (I play bass on that one) and was replaced by Pekka. Now we have also invited another guitarist, Juha, into our line-up. I guess that our current line-up (Juha just came, and I can't say so much about that yet) is really steady. After all it has been current for about 2½ years.

I have to admit that your new release is one of the better records that Repulse Records has put out in years.

Thanks a lot!

How did you come into contact with them, and what kind of deal did you sign with them?

Mika sent our 10" to Dave, and he really liked it for some reason. We signed a three CD deal with Repulse which was really nice, because now we can mainly concentrate on the writing of music.

Are you happy with the work they've done for you so far?

Yes, I certainly have been happy!

What is life like in Finland? Have you visited many other countries, if so how do you see Finland now after being in other countries? How is America portrayed there in Finland, and have you ever been to the states?

Finland is really safe place to live. Finland is also quite far away from everything, and it's fucking hard to even go to central Europe to play live because of it costs too much for us and the gig-arrangers to take us. I have personally visited Sweden (1000 times), Germany (100 times), Denmark and England and after all of those places it has always been nice to come back to home. I wrote some lines about Finland-America relationship earlier.

Nope, I have never been in States, but it would be really cool to come there some day.

How long have you personally been into metal? What was your first metal album, and what was it that hooked you? What are some of your all time favorite bands, and have you ever gotten a chance to see any of them live? How did they compare to the albums for you?

I initially started to listen to punk in the end of 70's and switched into metal in the start of 80's, when I heard Iron Maiden. I liked Number of the Beast musically, because it was really technical and new back then. The next big event for me was (of course) Hell Awaits of you know which band. My faves of all time are Slayer, Entombed, Machine Head, Meshuggah, E.N.T., Doom, Fear Factory, Dark Tranquillity, Cradle of Filth. I've saw live Slayer (1½ weeks ago, finally!!!!), Pantera, Dream Theater, Sentenced, Doom, Morbid Angel, Pestilence, Death, Napalm Death, Entombed, Sodom, Sepultura, Megadeth, Metallica, Children of Bodom, Emperor, Cradle of Filth, Coal Chamber, Black Sabbath (with Ozzy), Prodigy and tons of more. I know that this wasn't an answer to your question, but when I started of thinking about godly bands, I forgot many of them and hopefully some of them got covered with the list of bands I've seen live.

Does Rotten Sound play live much, and what are the shows like? Do you get much crowd participation during your set? What are some of the best live shows you've ever seen?

(interview continued on page 58)

Pure head banging metal. That is the charm of Scepter, and I was (and still am) taken in from the second I hit "play" on their CD Metal Supremacy. John hooked me up with a great interview through the mail. I can't wait for their full-length to appear this fall, but for now read to see what John had to say, and buy all their current material. I know you'll be dying to get the new stuff like me as soon as you hear Scepter... (Bart)

Scepter has that "old school" metal style. How long has each member been playing his instrument, and how long has each been into the metal scene? Did any of the members play in bands prior to Scepter?

Todd has been playing guitar for over ten years. I myself have been playing bass for over ten years also. Eric's been drumming for about seven or eight years on a kit, but he was always playing in the school band and shit as a kid. Other bands we've been involved in before Scepter were The Dead Youth, Violent Insanity, some other bands that lasted for a few days and of course, Nostradamus in which the three of us jammed for about six months then dissolved the band. Nostradamus was the precursor for Scepter.

The "old school" sound has been popular of late, but I know Scepter has been around for a while now. How long has the band been together, and have you had any member changes since the band got together?

Todd, Eric and I got together in 1991 and formed Nostradamus. I was in The Dead Youth at the time, and Eric and Todd were in Violent Insanity. Both bands were in downtime, so I presented these guys with some ideas that were rejected by The Dead Youth, and we started jamming. That lasted about six months until commitments to our main bands took precedence. I got kicked out of T.D.Y. in 1995, and V.I. was falling apart. So Todd and I hooked up again while Eric was off doing his own thing. We recruited a drummer name Dave and went to work. Dave left in 1995 due to personal matters and Eric rejoined. We have remained as Todd (guitars), Eric (drums) and myself on bass and vocals thus far.

Only material I have heard from Scepter is the awesome Metal Supremacy. What previous material have you released and what did it sound like compared to Metal Supremacy?

We released Up Thy Ass in 1995. It was a four song cassette EP containing the now classics, "Up Thy Ass", "Feel the Steel", "She Rides Majestically" and "Let Earth Receive Her King." The style is the same as Metal Supremacy, maybe simpler in music technique but as we all know, a band matures as it continues. The new material we have now kind of fuses both of those eras together with new speedier, more rotten elements.

You mentioned to me that you were going to sign to a label. What label did you sign with, and why did you decide to go with them? Do you think the current rush of "old school" style bands helped you get signed?

We have signed to Germany's Merciless Records and our debut album, I'm Going to Hell will be most likely released in September! Expect ten songs of pure fucking METAL done the Scepter way. As far as us getting a deal because of the "old school" trend, I don't think that's the case. Volker contacted us during the Up Thy Ass days. Metal Supremacy was gonna be our debut album on Merciless, but we decided to wait to cultivate our metalness some more before committing to a record deal. It was for the best anyway, 'cuz we've had the time to really hone in on our style and technique, giving our fans a truly satisfying album experience to come. As for the "old school" styled bands, most of them are involved in synth or black metal bands anyway so it's not real. Our circumstances are that my band kicked me out, and Todd and Eric were available as Todd's band fell apart and Eric was doing nothing substantial, and we dedicated our lives to one cause. We don't consider Scepter to be "old school." We're writing the same way we always have, it's just that now we're in a band where all the members see eye to eye musically so we can finally flourish!

The scene there in Illinois is pretty active, but there has always been a division between certain bands. Why do you think that is and have things gotten any better lately? What bands from that area do you personally like and recommend?

Illinois, or Chicago in particular, has always been back stabbing and competitive. Alliances are few and far between, but if you treat others respectfully you'll probably receive the same. There's plenty of poseurs and faggots here, but I'm sure it's the same everywhere. Here though, people speak their minds and that causes friction. Who fucking cares? If you believe in yourself and your band, the rest of the world and their opinions can go to hell. We don't socialize with too many bands so I don't really know if things have gotten better, and I really don't care. Scepter rules my life so I really don't have much time to think about anybody else. I like Cianide.

When listening to some bands, I get the feeling they are so unoriginal and clone another band so closely that they are adding nothing at all to the music scene. Don't they realize they're awful? How can some bands suck so much and still bug others with their music?

It's up to the record labels. I look at it this way. A record label is like a whore. To stay in business, a whore must give her public what it wants, that is, cheap unfeeling sex. Plenty of people settle for that so the whore stays in business. Most record labels get hip to a trend and give "the people" what they want to stay in business. Most people are mindless sheep who are into anything so that's why so many gay bands get successful, and a lot of real bands with integrity go nowhere. If you want "success" be a whore.

What albums do you think every metal fan should own and why? What is one band in the scene that you feel is the most overrated band and why?

I don't care what albums anybody owns. My favorites are: Dressed to Kill, Black Metal, Morbid Tales, Too Fast for Love, Pleasure to Kill, Eternal Devastation and a bunch more. I can relate to people into these albums better than those who aren't. These are people I consider my METAL peers, the rest can rot. If you own all or most of these albums, then that's great. If you don't, then don't bother getting them 'cause you'll probably never be cool anyway. The last thing we need is another "old school" inductee. Any band I don't like that is successful is overrated in my opinion. That list is endless...

How often do you get to play live, and what is Scepter like live? Do you like to play live and why? I would think your music would be great live causing much headbanging and moshing to occur. True? How do you handle the crossed arm stares that bands get sometimes, and how do you keep yourself into the music without letting it distract you?

When Scepter plays live it's usually a sea of banging heads and clenched fists. We just take the stage with our axes and drums, maybe some smoke and lights for effect but it's basically just three maniacs playing the best metal they can. Playing live rules. We usually play once a year, but that will change. At first, we felt we'd burn out the fans with too many show, as we like to make a Scepter concert an event! But this year we're gonna try to play a few shitholes around here just to be assholes. The first such show will take place at a white-trash bar called the "Horizon Club" on June 13, 1998 with Cianide and Hatewave. If there are any cross-armed starers in the room it is because they are poseur corpses already killed by our metal might!

How much time a week do you think the band occupies of your time? What do the band members do to make ends meet, and how often does that interfere with the band? What else do the band members do away from the band and work?

Anything un-Scepter related interferes with the band. Working sucks, but until we become rock stars that is inevitable. Everything we do is related to the band. METAL is honesty, integrity and resolve. Master

those qualities, and power, honor and glory will surely follow. Every action is one of metal in our lives so "away from the band or work" are only relative terms because METAL is for every moment in life. We practice four times a week.

Eric

What's some things you find most promising in the underground, and what are some things that disgust you about the scene? Why?

There is no underground anymore because anybody anywhere can get anything anytime. Shitty bands on shitty labels get coverage in major magazines today that bands ten or fifteen years ago would have killed for. The "underground" is the scene. There is no underground "underground" so the term is obsolete today. Anybody with a few grand can put out a disc, and if the marketing and trendiness are just right, the release is a success. Today, there is a metal scene and that is all. The most promising thing in metal today is Scepter. We are the new breed. "Thrash," "Black," "Death," metal bands are irrelevant. The only ones who matter are those who believe in themselves and their music. Whatever the style, as long as the principles of "honesty, integrity and resolve" are followed, real METAL will prevail. It's instinctive as well, because there's die-hard Pantera fans out there who don't even realize what a bunch of former poofy-haired-turned-skinhead/death/black/metal wannabe's this band really is. One must study the past to know the truth today. To study today would be merely academic because a real metalhead should know the past already. That's why poseur crimes with the retrospect we hold today are unforgivable.

What's the low down on the new album? When is it going to be released, and how does it compare to your older material?

Our debut album, I'm Going to Hell, will be out by September on Merciless Records! It will contain ten new songs including, "Eyes of the Watcher," "Payback's a Bitch," "Solitary Suicide," "Deathspell," and others. The new material is a natural progression in our sound. Totally heavy, totally rocks with some speedier elements added this time around. If you worship our first two releases then you will also worship the new album.

Having been in the underground for a good while now, what kind of recommendations would you give to a new band just starting out in the underground?

The main thing that will make a new band's life easier is, if possible, have one guy in the band who is responsible yet unemployed. That way one guy is always doing mail, working on layouts, running errands for the band, etc. We all work, and the band is our existence so you can understand the conflict of interest. A band must also decide whether they are serious or doing it as a hobby. It's easy to get noticed if you get your shit out there and don't fuck around. The last thing is a question of integrity. If pleasing yourself first is a priority, don't expect your band to have mass appeal. If you want to get big, chances are your band will have to whore out on whatever is the hip trend at the time. Trends exist because most people don't care about integrity anyway. They just need a quick fix of whatever they happen to be into at the time. If this is for your band, go for it. You'll probably be successful.

I look forward to hearing the new album man, and I thank you for taking the time to fill this interview out. Anything I missed you can cover here...

I think you pretty much got it all covered. Keep banging!

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Written Spew

Arrows of Malice #1
C/o Julia Britton
P.O. Box 668
House Springs, MO 63051
Promising new zine here. Julia has jumped with both feet into the underground, and after meeting her in person, I can tell you she is sincerely into the metal she claims to support. Only sixteen pages here, but she has started off in newsprint and that gives her a more professional touch from the start. Interviews with: Witchery (FL), Furia, Edenrot, Deaden and Blakk. No pictures this time around because she was using a friends computer to finish this issue, and promises that it will look better next issue. Julia is very fast with mail, and I encourage you to contact her immediately. (Bart)

Autoeroticasphyxium #1, #2
3 Maple Street
Garden City, NY 11530
Dave is another who like myself enjoys both metal and punk. In #1 he interviews: Abazagorath, Blood Storm, Warzone, Murder Junkies (GG Allen's band), and more. For #2 he interviews: I Despise, El Duce of the Mentors, Jill of Mortal Coil, Darkthrone and plenty more. Second issue shows good amount of improvement. Both are Xeroxed with the staples on the left hand side. #2 has a color cover as well. Only complaint is the inclusion of biography sheets of bands. While this is good promotion for the band featured, as thick each issue is, I know he's paying out the nose for postage and taking these out for #3 would help a lot for the postage bills. Good zine regardless my whining. (Bart)

Black Blood Red #1
C/o J.M. Gonzalez
3543 Greystone, Apt. #2047
Austin, TX 78731
Here we have a self-produced comic with quite a strange story line. Within this first issue, the story just beings to unfold in another reality were "time is obsolete and nothing appears as it seems" which begins with two buds out on a beer run, discussing a "job" to recover a lost relic. Upon returning home, a battle with a few mutants of some kind ensues, which is where this issue leaves off. The story line here seems interesting, which is just at vital if not more than good artwork. This comic has decent artwork, which lets the story unfold more naturally. If you're into comics and this type of stuff, definitely check this out. Write for more info. (Jeff)

Canadian Assault #1
C/o Dale Roy
P.O. Box 682
Blackfalds, Alberta
T0M 0J0 Canada
Damn fine start for a zine that has found a way to cram a lot of info in their first issue. Interviews with Arch Enemy, Rotting, Scepter, Stratovarius, Tenebrae, Infernal Majesty, Possession, Fleshgrind, Eternal Darkness Recs/Distro/Mag and Sacramentary Abolishment. Quite a few reviews for a first issue here. Well written through the zine as well. Xeroxed with staples along the left side is how this zine is put together. Solid first issue to say the least. (Bart)

Children of Caine #2
P.O. Box 9400
Waterbury, CT 06724
Massive zine here. 116 pages by my rough counting. All kinds of music covered here, and interviews include chats with Yen Pox, Loretta's Doll, Tesco Vee of the Meatmen, Absu, Broken Hope, Black Lodge and more. Nice glossy cover too like my fourth issue did. Only thing I could see improved would be to try to get rid of some of the wasted space and bring the page count down some. Otherwise plenty of information here for the extreme music fan. (Bart)

Crusader Fanzine #3
P.O.Box 39550
Garsfontein
Pretoria
South Africa, 0060
Great zine here from my first contact in South Africa. A metal zine through and through here, and what makes this zine is its attitude and love for the underground. Interviews with: Hammerfall, Krabathor, Retalliation, Nile and more. Well written reviews with reference to the band's lyrics in every review. Great looking zine and well worth getting in touch with Lunatic to check this zine out. (Bart)

Death-Core #1
11 Coltsbrook Rd.
Marlboro, NJ 07746
Solid start for a zine that sports interviews with: Fleshgrind, Anal Cunt, Intestine, Aurora Borealis, Level, Botulism and more. Quite a few reviews (more than fifty) for a first issue as well. It's all wrapped up in 32 pages of newsprint. Only drawback in my eyes is the lack of photos other that what is in the ads. The writer says he doesn't like pics in with the interviews though, and since it's his zine all the power to him. The material is here though, and it should only get better. (Bart)

Devil's Triangle #5
P.O. Box 870232
Morrow, GA 30287-0232
This zine has shown a good amount of growth with this issue. The zine is easier on the eyes, and is more space conscious. Interviews with: Saxon, Cannibal Corpse (lengthy one), Skinlab, Sickness, Unholy Death, Requiem and Angelkill. This one is printed out on a color printer, and I can see it getting expensive for them if they sell a lot of copies, but it does look good. Quite a few reviews and ads fill up the later half of the zine. Long live reviews of Judas Priest and Saxon as well. Solid zine. (Bart)

Dreaded Fanzine #9
C/o Mike Smith
R.R. 2 Box 94
Blue Mound, IL 62513
Photo-copied zine here that is 46 pages thick. It's a bit dated, but both Mike Smith and Dave Kibler (Lividity) do this zine only when they have time lately. Death metal is their love, and it shows with interviews with: Evil Incarnate, Scattered Remnants, Numskull, Deaden, Horror of Horrors and Chris Forbes of Metal-Core 'zine. Plenty of reviews here although a good number of them are on the short side. Good zine, and worth getting in touch with especially if death metal is your main love. (Bart)

Drenched in Blood #6
C/o Dave Dayton
6435 Hwy. 65
Fridley, MN 55432
Mixed feelings here. I'm really glad Dave went to newsprint finally. It really helps make his zine look better. Interviews in this issue include Gorgasm, Molested Senses, Deaden, Fleshgrind, Hypocrisy, Broken Hope and yours truly for Intellektual Spew 'zine. Sixteen pages here, and he's got quite a bit of info in here. The down side that if he's going to make the step up to newsprint then he needs to make a decent attempt to proofread the zine. I know this zine is far from perfect, but this issue is pretty sloppy in places causing it to lose some of it's professionalism gained by the improvement of newsprint. (Bart)

Eternal Darkness Fanzine #11
P.O. Box 268
Corapolis, PA 15108
What a massive issue this is. It's been quite a while since Keith and company put out a last issue, but you can sure tell the reviews and interviews have piled up since the last issue. Interviews with: Warhammer, Tenebrae, Samael, Scepter, Pentacle and a ton others. He interviews both signed and unsigned bands equally. Same is true with the reviews and there are a shitload of them to boot. I don't always agree with what he likes or dislikes, but he gives his reasons thoughtfully and completely. Too much information here to pass up on. Oh yeah, you get his tape compilation along with the price of the zine. The tape is reviewed in the demo section of this issue. (Bart)

Feast or Famine #1
P.O. Box 242
Exton, PA 19341

This cover of this mag shows Bill Clinton in office giving the sign of the horns while the headline reads in all caps; "HEAVY METAL IS THE LAW!" If that doesn't give you any indication that this is going to be a killer read, I don't know what will. And a killer read it is! This magazine goes about things in a rather uncommon manner, which grants itself a unique personality through and through. As you may have guessed, this publication's focus likes mainly within the traditional/power/heavy metal (you get the idea) realm, which I think is great, and from what I gather anything is possible for this mag (as long as it's metal of course). Within this very impressive debut issue you get interviews and chats with: Annihilator, Samael, Spastic Ink, Strapping Young Lad and my personal favorites of the issue: Scanner, Hammerfall, Flotsam and Jetsam, and Jag Panzer. Along with all of that you get thorough and knowledgeable worthy reviews spanning all types of metal. And also included is a hilarious rip on Metallica where you get to put the long hair and leather back on the pretty boys. Brilliant! What more can be said to convince? Get in touch! (Jeff)

Foeticide #1
C/o Alan Castro R
P.O. Box 11438
La Paz - Bolivia
South America
Another zine starting out with excellent first issue. Alan loves the death and grind aspect of metal. Features tons of interviews and some are with: Catasexual Urge Motivation, Hemdale, Morbid Records, Exhumed, Deeds of Flesh, Judecca, Deaden and more. There are a ton of reviews especially for a first issue for a zine when you don't always get that much material submitted for review. The entire zine is written in both English and Spanish so a large portion of this world can check this zine out. Slick cover tops off a great issue of sickness. (Bart)

Gore Worm #3
C/o P.J. Scoggins
153 Roberts
Jerseyville, IL 62052
I met up with P.J. at the Illnoize Death fest and he handed me their new issue of Gore Worm, but I'm not sure that this is issue #3, because I can't find the number on it. Just ask for the Russell Evans issue, because that's pretty much what this is. We know how great an artist Russell is because he's done the covers of Intellektual Spew for the past two issues and does a great job. He has a story line to go along with the incredibly detailed artwork that he's known for. The second half of this sixteen page comic is done by Dennis John Glinski, and his artwork is similar to Russell that he does very detailed work that exhibits muscular bodies quite well. Write P.J. to get the low down on this great mini-comic. (Bart)

The Grimoire of Exalted Deeds #12
248 Lakeview Ave., Suite 237
Clifton, NJ 07011
Well here's a zine that everyone knows of if you've been in the underground any reasonable time. I was a huge fan of this zine in its early goings (hell, a letter of mine is in #5 praising his zine), but I have found myself slowly growing disenchanted with this mag. Bill's zine is for entertainment only. Keeping that in mind, everyone can find things here and there that are quite humorous. His unique interviews where he is constantly fucking with the band makes for some funny situations. I guess it's all just gotten old to me. "Interviews" with King Diamond, Impaled Nazarene, November's Doom, Abazagorath, Diabolic and many more. Nice color cover on this issue, and Bill promises that the next issue will be seen in more avenues than ever before. I can't argue Bill's success. I'm just not one of his die-hard fans anymore. (Bart)

Harbringer of Devastation #1
P.O. Box 226
Kogarah NSW
Australia 2217
Wow, what a first issue. Full color cover and back page on this white paper stock zine from down under. This zine loves death metal and makes no bones about it. Chats are with Misery, Brutal Truth, Fleshgrind, Suffocation, Nefarious and more. It also interviews the porn star Asia Carrera. This zine has an amazing layout for a first issue. Reviews of music and porn movies are strew through out the zine. Excellent first start. Don't know if he can afford to go this route at higher printing runs, but write now and enjoy it while you can. (Bart)

Headfucker #5
C/o Raffaella Guerini
C.P. 151
25038 Rovato
Brescia, Italy
Another year....another issue of Headfucker. If you love death metal, and haven't experienced this zine then you are sorely missing out. The layout and quality of printing style they use is phenomenal. Raff's writing style is unique and keeps you reading. The interviews are thoroughly done with Pyrexia, Soilent Green, Blood Duster, Dying Fetus, Nile and many more. Her asking price for the zine is a bit higher than most but you will understand why when you get this excellent zine in your hands. Don't waste anymore time. Get this new issue now. (Bart)

Hectic Metal Magazine #1
P.O. Box 401122
San Francisco, CA 94140-1122
Half-sizer here that features interviews with Exhumed, Stuck Mojo, Old Grandad, Thunderchimp, Lost Goat, Fugazi and more. Nice color cover with this photo-copies zine. Plenty of reviews here along with a lot of ads from various underground bands, zines, etc. Some live show reviews as well. Good start for a "label" zine, that doesn't just cater to its own acts. (Bart)

Hellflame Mag #4
C/o Solieri Nicola
C.P. 1004
40124 Bologna
Italy
This photo copied zine from Italy is full of bands that don't get much coverage here in the states. The zine tends to cover Swedish death and black metal for the majority of it's pages, but does show love for all styles of metal. Interviews include Blood Storm, The Ancients Rebirth, Angelcorpse, From the Dark and a couple more. There are a ton of reviews here to go through. Getting in touch now would be the only acceptable course of action. (Bart)

Hell Frost #5
9933 W. Argonne Drive
Milwaukee, WI 53222
This is my first exposure to this zine although I have heard its named volleyed about here and there. Features some chats with Anal Cunt, Absu, Hypocrisy, Morbid Angel, Necrophobic, Suffocation, Wumpscut and more. The reviews are broken up into genre of music and they do cover a wide range of music. This zine hasn't totally impressed me personally, but this zine does sport the knowledge necessary to stay afloat in this sea of zines. (Bart)

Hell Razor #19
C/o Patrick Doms
L' carrestraat 22F
2220 Hallar
Prov. Antwerpen
Belgium
All kinds of metal genres are covered in this Belgium zine. Tons of interviews although most are kinda on the short side. Interviews with: Inhume, Deeds of Flesh, Regurgitation, Besieged, Repudilation, Funeral Mist and many more. There are tons of short biographies for many underground bands. A couple scene reports here one is for Bolivia and the other is for South America. I personally like reading this zine because of the large number of bands we normally don't hear about here in the states. (Bart)

Inner V.O.I.D. Hard Music Journal #2
P.O. Box 975
Dickson, TN 37055
Chuck of Disarry is back with another issue of his zine. He went glossy cover again with newsprint innards. Interviews include the likes of Stuck Mojo, Broken Hope, One Life Crew, Crush Efekt and Fleshtized. The layout has improved, and he brought the font size down some since he has more material to cover in the same space as #1. Improving zine that will appeal to both the metal and hardcore crowds. (Bart)

Jackal Blaster #1, #2
P.O. Box 128
St. Mary, MO 63673-0128
This is a great zine, and it is apparent once you look through both issues. With Vol. 1, you get interviews with: Dissection, At the Gates, Hemdale, Drogheda and Pitchshifter with over 130 reviews. When you look at Vol. 2, you see quite an improvement...interviews with: Ancient Rites (a five pager), Summon, Exhumed, Brutal Truth and a great five a half page interview with Cannibal Corpse with even more reviews. It'll be interesting to see what Vol. 3 will come out like, but in the meantime, anyone looking for an open minded multi-genre zine would do good to check this out. (Jeff)

Meathooked #1
C/o Ville Sorvali
Porvoonkatu 37 B 6
00520 Helsinki
Finland
64 slick pages make up this Finnish zine of high caliber. Chats with Enslaved, Gloomy Grim, Hammerfall, Nomicon, Swordmaster, Therion, Tyrant and more make up the majority of this zine. There are a ton of reviews here as well. There are different awards given out through out the review sections. "Best of", "Worst of", "Best Art", "Most Irritating" and such are the categories. Makes for a different reading experience that I like. All the albums are "ranked" on the basis of the various reviewers, and that helps come up with some of the awards as well. Definitely a great start for a zine that should get even better with time. (Bart)

Metal-Core #24
C/o Chris Forbes
13 Carriage Lane
Marlton, NJ 08053-1109
Damn Chris has been doing this zine a long time. He returns with another issue that features great, in-depth interviews with: Immolation, Phil of Brutalized 'zine, Jill of Mortal Coil Records, Dave of Spiked Impalement 'zine and Gardenian. He still features tons of reviews although most are only a couple sentences at most. He's purchased a computer to do this issue, and I hope it shows for next issue. Use of columns would help the eye strain induced when trying to read all of this zine. Should get this for the interviews alone. Write Chris now. (Bart)

Metal Curse #11
P.O. Box 302
Elkhart, IN 46515-0302
I was starting to wonder if Ray had called it a day with Metal Curse, but that always seems to be my thoughts just before a new issue sees the light of day. I immediately went to and read the whole Jello Biafra interview. Kudos to Ray for the lengthy and detailed interview. Other interviews includes Mercyful Fate/King Diamond, The Great Kat (I have yet to see an interview where she doesn't come across as a totally annoying bitch), Incantation, Unleashed, Hellwitch, Skepticism, Hemdale and Sigh. Over 750 reviews although if you've read a issue of Metal Curse you know how he pulls this off. His reviews are rarely over four sentences long at most. Tons, and I mean tons, of info here to soak in. Worth the cost of the zine alone for the Jello interview in my opinion. (Bart)

Metal Nightmare #1
C/o Tom Wren
P.O. Box 420195
San Diego, CA 92142
Tom formerly of Carcharoth 'zine has just changed to a new name. His attitude has changed slightly giving more attention to the bands of lore that had more that just great music. He's wanting to feature bands that rekindle that old '80s style of metal with the great stage show as well. He interviews a ton of bands such as: Dawn, Lord Belial, Destroyer 666, Skullview, Usurper, Possessed, Nocturnal Breed, Sabbat, Nasty Savage, Omen and many

more. 80 pages of newsprint filled to the brim with metal makes for a zine I'd recommend to anyone. (Bart)

Metal Rules #1
C/o Jeff Rappaport
2116 Sandra Road
Voorhees, NJ 08043
This is one of the better new zines I've seen come out lately because the love of metal shines through. It also hits on some old memories that I have for metal that brought a smile to my face. Jeff and friends hit on all types of metal from old glam to death and black metal. He interviews Kane Roberts and Gene Allen who are formerly from Alice Cooper and Lizzy Borden respectively. Great start for this zine. (Bart)

Midwest Metal #18
120 Broadview Village Square Suite #406
Broadview, IL 60153
I don't know what Tom did different this issue, but this shows a great amount of growth for a zine. The look has improved a great deal along with the layout and presentation. Tom's mix of hardcore and metal is still prevalent here. Interviews with Deicide, Eternal Hatred, Disinter, King Diamond, Pro-Pain, Morbid Angel, Angelcorpse and more. The writing is better than ever this issue, and I highly recommend you get in touch with Tom. (Bart)

New Breed #1, #2
P.O. Box 736
Piqua, OH 45356
I'll cover #2 here, but trust me that #1 is just as good (lame reasoning to cover up the fact that I can't find #1 right now, but it was good when I read it). #2 features interviews with: Napalm Death, Obituary, Machine Head, Sevendust, Extreme Noise Terror, Lividity, and quite a few more. Death metal is the main love here, but they do show interest in most styles of metal. The layout is pretty fucking sharp, and the writing is solid. Very promising zine that is only on its second issue. (Bart)

Nihilistic Holocaust #1
C/o Skowron Gabriel
9, Rue de la Scarpe
59552 Lambres Lez Douai
France
This French zine is xeroxed and filled with death and grind. Interviews inside are Amon, Bloodsuckers, Depraved, Eviternity, Kadath, Krabathor, Gothic and quite a few more. Quite a few reviews although most are quite short. Almost every single band has their logo included with their review which is a touch that I've always liked. There are a lot of foreign bands that I don't normally hear of, and the love of death metal is evident here. Those should be the reasons you contact this holocaust now. (Bart)

Nordic Vision #11
P.O. Box 285
1450 Nesoddtangen
Norway
Gracing the cover is none other than Dark Funeral, blood soaked and ready for battle. Yippy! As always, Melankol ups the ante with each release, the latest outdoing that of the last. With a supreme layout in hand, Melankol and team go about interrogations with War, Willow Wisp, a few surprising interviews with bands such as Sadus, Cannibal Corpse and Krabathor and chats with long time familiar faces with its pages, Immortal, Gehenna, Satyricon and of course Dark Funeral. Along with this we get their unique brand of criticism on the latest releases and demo and such plus its regular informing news column. Also, we get their opinions on a selection of zines (look out for the 'Spew in their next issue!) and a rundown of two videos from The Great Kat. Great news, their next issue signals the return of their Christ Fighters Union which has been absent for a while now. They have many things brewing on the metal horizon to add to their already killer publication. If this mag gets any better they'll need a license to sell the fucker. This is a must, a must, a must, a must, a motherfucking must! So get it! Now! (Jeff)

Old Goat Zine #3
C/o Kevin
1117 Purcell Ave.
Cincinnati, OH 45205
Nice mix of metal and punk here which I personally like since I listen to both genres. Kevin is a bit older than most so his perspective brings in a different angle which is refreshing to zines. Various essays on life and metal. Interviews with: Counterpoise, Jack Killed Jill, Anti-Flag, Device, and Violent Dissorder. This Xeroxed zine is worth checking out, but especially for the metal heads that have been in the scene for years. (Bart)

The Outcast #2
C/o Mike Coles
P.O. Box 94
Ironton, MO 63650
If it weren't for Mike's obvious love of metal then this zine wouldn't really be that special. But it is his love of metal that makes this zine special. Mike lives for metal. He does some talks with Eternal Suffering, Metal Mafia 'zine, Coroners Report 'zine, Theatre of Tragedy, Drohm, Fleshgrind, Ritual and more. There are a large amount of reviews to wade through. Oh yeah, I almost forgot the interview gem of this issue. He "interviews" the Great Kat, and it is hilarious. He acts stoned so to just get her to act crazier and boy does it work. Solid zine all wrapped up in a spiral bound notebook like layout. Writing him now would be the only way to go. (Bart)

Pernicious #5, #6
C/o Eamon
579 Clark Pl.
Uniondale, NY 11553
Yet another underground offering from Eamon. His writing style is getting more and more unique when it feels as if you're reading from old Carcass lyrics when going through his reviews. He interviews Black Mass, Devourment, Mass Murder and more in #5. In #6 he interviews: Eruptions From Below, Femento, Kuru, Fleshtized, and more. Eamon

has gotten the writing ability here. If he can now concentrate on the layout and presentation (#6 does show improvement), this zine will really be awesome. (Bart)

Perverted People #13
1761 Co. Rd. 47
Waterloo, OH 45688
Dirty, chaotic and somewhat sloppy zine, but that doesn't prevent me from liking this zine. Interviews with Towpath, Gonkulator, El Pecado, ½ Creeper 'zine and more. He does the strange method of not always interviewing bands/projects that he likes. Layout is somewhat chaotic, but the heart is there along with the info. Fun read. (Bart)

Portrait of Defiance #5
C/o Jack Botos
1221 North Johnson Street
South Bend, IN 46628
Interviews start off with Emperor, Morgoth, Num Skull, Bill of Grimoire of Exalted Deeds 'zine and a couple more. A large amount of reviews as well. The whole format is similar to that of Metal Curse for those who've seen that great zine. Only complaint is the wasted space, but it's not that bad really and has improved from last issue. Great zine though to check out. (Bart)

Satan's Candy Basket #2
C/o Burt Beo Wolf
644 E. High St. Apt. 2B
Pottstown, PA 19464
Damn, Burt and company have shown a lot of growth being only at their second issue. The wide array of musical styles covered here is impressive because there is something from every genre of metal that Burt and friends likes and dislike. Interviews with: Coal Chamber, Deaden, Misery Loves Company, Morbid Angel, Scattered Remnants, Snot and more. Just by looking at that list of interviews, it just goes to show the wide array of music that is appreciated by this zine. Tons of reviews of CD's, demos, zines and live shows. The layout was cleaned up a lot this issue, and it is much more reader friendly. Definitely worth getting in touch with Burt. (Bart)

Savannatarashi #1
C/o Billy Nocera
22 Acorn Ave.
Farmingville, NY 11738
This is done by Billy of Be a Freak Records. It's rather old, but since I don't get much if any zines that cover noise I thought I'd feature it here anyway. This thick photo-copied zine features talks with Fragmented, Moth, Merzbow, Netherworld/Insane Domain Productions, Gore Beyond Necropsy, Suppression and many more. There are a ton of reviews both noise and metal in the zine as well. The layout is pretty chaotic, but not too hard to follow. Fun to read for something that doesn't cover the typical bands and acts. (Bart)

So, Why Worry?

So Why Worry? #3
C/o Gil Russell
1107 S. Bruce
Monahans, TX 79756-5511
This is my first taste of this hardcore/punk/metal zine. Gil and company puts a lot of heart into this zine, and I hope this zine sticks around because the love for the scene is quite evident here. Interviews with Disassociate, Strong Intention, Seized, Opstand, Hemlock, Forced Expression, Brutal Truth and more. The essays though are the life and blood of this zine. Reading them gives you the clue that you're not the only one who's all fucked up in this world. A lot of reviews are crammed in the back for more info to boot. Great zine. (Bart)

Snakepit #2
P.O. Box 210212
28222 Bremen
Germany
Here is a magazine I've recently came across much by chance through a friend of mine. Snakepit comes to us from the land of Germany and is quite an awesome magazine indeed! Dedicated to the killer scene of traditional power, thrash, progressive and pure heavy metal! Only on its second issue, this mag already has a layout that most never achieve, with a thick stock, black and white glossy cover. Great writing and reviews as well as the overall attitude towards the scene of real metal. This issue features a label spotlight on the mighty Neat Records as well as interviews with majors like: Razor, Venom, Raven, Manowar, Jag Panzer, Nocturnal Rites, Gamma Ray, Primal Fear and Overkill as well as ten more bands. This mag sports a unique style of interviewing as well as an all around personality. The top of the zine states: Heavy Metal Magazine. That's what it's all about! (Jeff)

Torture Chamber Reviews #7
C/o Carolyn
P.O. Box 9563
Canton, OH 44711
Carolyn and Dan are back with another issue. Another issue with sick cover artwork and plenty of support for underground bands. Interviews with Internal Bleeding, Avernus and Oppressor. Quite a few reviews as well. They've shown they can produce a much nicer and neater layout with the Internal Bleeding layout. I hope they go for that for the entire issue next time. These two are true supporters of the underground and should be contacted. (Bart)

Ultima Comparatio 'zine #1, #2
C/o Lance Gifford
1576 North Street
Suffield, CT 06078
I have heard so little about this zine that I couldn't believe how great this black metal zine was once I got it in the mail. I can easily say that this is THE black metal zine here in the states, and probably in the entire world. Lance shows his knowledge of the black metal crowd on every page, and his devotion to the dark arts is astounding to produce a zine such as this. Interviews in #1 include: Primigenium, Vondür, Swordmaster, Dethroned and more. #2 asks questions of: Judas Iscariot, Abazagorath, Usurper, Setherial, Thorns, Bethlehem (awesome, lengthy interview) and many more. Lance mainly supports and reviews black metal, but it must be said that he shows knowledge and love for most styles of metal. Great zine. (Bart)

Underground Zine Scene #9
316 E. Main St.
Sebewaing, MI 48726
My first exposure to this zine. Photo copied zine that pretty much does as you would figure it would. It reviews zines. Metal, punk, hardcore, etc zines are all reviewed here. Also interviews a few bands such as Garden of Shadows, Night in Gales and Pino Mattioli. Lots of info here for those freaks out there who can't get enough zines in their hands to read. (Bart)

The Unholy #8
P.O. Box 14605
Lenexa, KS 66285-4605
This would have to be my first time ever seeing this magazine (thanks to Patrick of Red Stream). Very nice looking all glossy, black and white print with 32 pages in all. Two page interviews with: Morbid Angel, Soulfly (Max Cavaleras' new band), Entombed, Stuck Mojo, Judas Priest, Extreme Noise Terror, Last Chapter, Union, Two (Rob Halford's new project) and Hateplow. This magazine has an overall neat look to it with a very balanced layout although there is a slight wasting of space. Meaning I thought they could have gotten a little bit more into the mag, but it does have a very attractive quality about it while the four full page ads bunched together didn't quite work so well, but their set up for reviews looks killer. A great zine with lots of possibilities in sight. (Jeff)

Unrestrained! #5
3150 Spring Creek Crescent
Mississauga
Ontario, Canada
L5N - 4S2
Wow...one year and they are already on issue #5. Took me two years to get that far, although I must say the mainstays behind Unrestrained have been doing a zine of sorts for much longer than myself. Excellent zine here with a nice glossy cover and white stock paper inside that features some of the best layout work around. Interviews with many bands but some highlights are with Monster Magnet, Slayer, Katatonia, Dio, Cannibal Corpse, Cryptopsy, and more. The writing is excellent throughout the pages of this zine, and it is well worth getting in touch with these guys to get a copy for yourself. (Bart)

The Wild Rag! #43
2207 W. Whittier Blvd.
P.O. Box 3302
Montebello, CA 90640
Richard's newsletter/catalog is back again. He features lots of info on underground bands, and reviews quite a few zines in the back as well. Plenty of info here for the price you are paying, and the catalog in the middle might interest you to order some items. (Bart)

Worm Gear #7
P.O. Box 426
Mayfield, MI 49666
Ahhh...another issue of Intellektual Spew 'zine and that means another issue of Worm Gear to fall into my grubby hands. Marty, Scott and pals crank out another solid issue that covers all areas of metal and then some with some extensive coverage of the noise scene that Scott adores. Interviews include: War (great interview), Canaan, Unholy, Centrifuge, In Flames, Abominant, Today is the Day, Hurdy Gurdy Records and The Soil Bleeds Black. Tons and tons of reviews as well are included. It can be said that although Marty is now writing for Metal Maniacs, you can rest assured that Worm Gear has not fallen by the way side. Another great issue from one of my faves zines. (Bart)

sculptured

There are some bands who exhibit class and elegance in their music. Sculptured has those two qualities by the truck loads. I have know Don of Sculptured since he did his zine a few years ago. He's always been a great guy to talk to, and I was more than happy to feature his great band here in Intellektual Spew. Here's what he had to say during a phone interview we

How long has Sculptured been together?

The summer of 1996...

I believe you were involved in other bands prior to Sculptured correct?

Yeah, but nothing too terribly serious. It was more traditional power metal stuff. We did one demo, and we recorded another demo that we were going to put on a CD, but it never came about. That's when everything kinda fell apart. I decided to keep things going though That's when Sculptured came around, and like I said that was the summer of 1996.

When did you put out your first demo for Sculptured?

The first demo came out about October of '96. It was a three song promo called Fulfillment in Tragedy, and the way it turns out, it was more like a promo for the album, because those three songs are on the CD that is out now. There aren't any actual hidden demos or anything like that, because that promo is like a preview sampler you could say.

Have you had any members change out in the band from the promo to the CD?

We've had a whole lot of crazy things happen. We recorded the whole album with John Schlegel on drums who've I've known since sixth grade, and we've played together ever since. Brian Yager did the clean vocals, and Burke Harris did the trumpet work. I covered everything else. After that happened, we managed to get another friend on guitar, and that gave us five people in the band. Then Jason Walton moved from Minneapolis to join in on bass guitar. We actually practiced in the garage for a while, and we were starting to get going, but then the drummer gave up on the drums for good. So now we have a new drummer doing very well, and we are now practicing again. The new drummer is named John Ham. So it's myself, Jason on bass, and Nick Wo is on guitar. We're working on our Iron Maiden tribute song that will be on a new tribute album by Twilight Records. We're covering the song "Iron Maiden", but that song is with myself and Chris Maycock (Dawnbringer) on drums.

When I hear Sculptured's music, I think it would be difficult to pull off live. Do you ever play live?

We never have played live. We may never, but I don't know. I'd like to, but it'd definitely be much more stripped down than on the CD. There probably wouldn't be any trumpets or no keyboards until we had our own keyboard player. It would definitely be very stripped down, and I have mixed emotions about playing live. So who knows if it'll ever happen.

Let's jump around a little then come back to Sculptured. I know you did the zine Infernal Archives for a while. Tell me a little about that.

I started that in October of '95. I think the main reason I started doing the zine was because my old band wasn't really doing anything in the underground, and I really enjoyed writing and corresponding, but it wasn't half as fun if I didn't have something to contribute. So I thought the best thing would be to try writing. I enjoyed writing, and I thought doing a zine would be a lot of fun. So I put out three issues, and I eventually ended that right before Sculptured took off. Sculptured was going to take a lot of money and time for the studio, so I decided to end the zine. Plus there are other zines that have been doing really well now like Worm Gear and your zine. I felt it was hard to compete with everyone as well so I decided to just stop. It was a lot of fun while I did it, and I covered a lot of really good bands.

I know you are writing for some other magazines now. Who are you writing for?

I'm just doing a couple interviews and reviews here and there. Mostly doing stuff for Worm Gear. I did do some reviews for the last issue of Ill Literature, but I don't know if it's out yet. Nothing has been really too serious besides the stuff I've done for Worm Gear.

Back to Sculptured...did you have anyone approach you besides Mad Lion for the record contract?

Yeah, I had Emancipation Productions out of Denmark contact me. They put out the Iniquity CD. It's the guy from Withering Surface behind that label. They approached me with a deal, but I had already signed a deal with Mad Lion. Of course, The End Records is now licensing it for America, Greece and Japan. Mad Lion had a good deal so I went with them.

> *"I didn't set out to say that I want to combine all these styles. It really just happened on its own."*

Are you happy with them so far?

Yeah, but I was very disappointed at the delay that they caused on the album, otherwise things have been perfectly fine. We have a fax machine so we are able to communicate quite well with one another. They've been very supportive. I'm also extremely satisfied with The End Records. They have been wonderful.

I have to admit that I didn't hear much about your album until The End Records started to promo it here in the states. Now I have seen your band everywhere.

Wonderful.

I've talked to people who've heard your album, and they didn't like it because they felt you were trying to do too much on it. How do you respond to that?

You definitely cannot please everybody, but then again that's not really a goal of mine. I just to please only myself really when I write the music. What has come out has almost been an active obsession for me, and I really don't write for anyone but myself. It's the inspiration that comes forth or like a train of conscience thought when I write the music. I didn't set out to say that I want to combine all these styles. It really just happened on its own. I didn't say I wanted to have a jazzier section or work on some classical themes or whatever. It's just what kinda came out. I never purposely try to make it sound any other way than what it actually sounds like on the CD.

Are you the one that mainly writes all the music?

Yeah, I write all the music.

How do you know when the song is done? I would think that'd be hard to know since you're not really hearing it all come together until you hear it in the studio.

Yeah know, it is very difficult to try to do it all on my own. I just have a four-track sitting in my room, and I try to get things working. There is also a certain type of beauty in that in the studio everything comes together in one big song. I have a very clear idea of what the song is going to sound like in my head, and I usually play it back and forth in my head to get a good idea of what it sounds like. I also believe that a song is never really finished. There are a thousand different ways you can redo it, and that is why when I did the Iron Maiden cover, I completely rearranged it. You can barely even tell it's an Iron Maiden song. I would love that someone would want to do that for Sculptured one day. I don't know who would, but I would never be at all offended if someone worked and redid it because the song is never done. I generally get the idea that the song is done when I feel that's the best I can do. Then I say the song is done. Even now that the album is out, I think of parts that I could have added here and there. It is difficult though being the only person.

What's the best thing you feel someone could say about the band?

That we are challenging. That we hopefully get better with each release. I'd like to think that the next album would be an improvement over the last one.

The main thing I tell people about your CD, is that I can't believe you guys are from the states. You don't have that sound of most American bands, and that is refreshing to see.

Yeah, in fact, when Andreas from The End Records first called me, he asked me if I was originally from Europe. I thought that was kind of funny. I think the main reason that I do sound like these bands is because I grew up listening to most of these European bands. People tend to categorize European bands with melody, female singers, keyboards or what not, and that is what I really liked. I never got too much into the brutal death stuff.

it never really moved me too much. I think I'd have the same influences as such bands as Septic Flesh or those type of bands have. I guess that's how I we have that European sound to us.

Have you worked on any new material yet?

Yeah I have three new songs that are done. I'm very much, 100% satisfied with them. So things are going very well. It's definitely a progression in my eyes. The next album will be called Goldberg. I really think it's going to be an improvement over the last album. I've very happy with everything so far.

When do you see that material coming out?

I can see myself at least going into the studio this coming January. Which may give it a release of a couple months after that. The End Records is really good with getting things out on time.

What do you do outside of the band?

I'm employed at a record store, actually it's a Tower Records, and I work in the classical room specifically. I'm the one that handles the classical questions and such. Besides that most of my free time is writing music or going to school. I'll be starting the summer quarter here pretty soon.

What are you going to school for?

I was originally going for a music degree, but right now I'm just going to get my associates in the arts. I'm stuck right now taking some math and science classes that I don't really care for, but I've already taken all the music courses that I can take at this moment.

What do you want to say to close this interview up?

I very much appreciate your interview, and your fine words towards the album. I am very happy to see people react to the album, and I think that's one of the greatest joys of writing music. More so than anything else I've ever done. When somebody really connects with it, that makes it all really worth it. I want to thank anybody who's bought the album and listened to it. Thanks again.

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(Odes of Ecstasy int. contd. from page 47)
high pitched voice, so it isn't difficult for her to sing in an operatic way.
I believe that these kinds of vocals fit very well with our music, because they are creating an impressive contrast with the brutal vocals.

Please tell us as best as you can what the philosophy of Odes of Ecstasy is like as far as lyrically and generally? Is religion a factor, and what is your view on this?

As I have already said, our only goal is to express our feelings through art (music and lyrics). We don't want to preach anyone about anything; we just try to describe our emotions with tones and words. If anyone finds any messages in our music or lyrics, he is not obliged to follow them. As a band we don't want to have fans, we want our music to be listened by people who won't feel followers of our philosophy.

Religions, for us, are what people created in order to feel protected from death. In my opinion, there isn't any God or life after death. Of course we respect everyone who has an opposite view, and we don't want to try to change anybody's beliefs.

I get the impression that you strive to execute your music in such a way as to be very artistic and to have a certain aura of class about it. Could you elaborate on this? This would obviously tie in with your philosophy, correct? Does the background of the members of Odes of Ecstasy tie in to this in any way (such as education for example)?

To tell you the truth nothing is done on purpose. When we compose, we just let our emotions take charge, and the result is what you hear in the CD. We don't try to play in an artistic or in a complex manner. We only try to follow our emotions' will. Of course, this way of composing ties with our philosophy: Art means Feelings (especially intense feelings).

As for the education, if you mean musical education, we are all taking lessons. That's why I believe that with every release we will be better as a band.

What is life like for you there in Greece? Please tell us a bit about your country, and how (if at all) it has affected your music and ideals and so on?

Life here is very good for everyone who loves the sun and the sea! Greece is the country in which democracy (Greek word) was "born", so we believe a lot in justice. I think that my country affected me a lot in my political beliefs such as, being against any form of racism. I believe that we are more influenced from our country in our lyrics than in our music, but it would be a great idea sometime to use some elements from Greek folk music.

Do you play live at all? I would think this would be quite a massive ordeal. If so, tell us about your live journeys both in Greece and abroad.

Unfortunately we haven't played live yet, but when the recordings of the CD were finished we decided that this is our first priority for the near future, even the fact that we have to overcome several problems. For example, some of our members are working in full time jobs, so they don't have a lot of spare time.

Tell us about how you came to sign with The End Records. Is this your first record deal?

Embossed dream... is indeed our first album. We had sent to The End our demo and promo '97, and they proposed us a very good record deal. We accepted it without any hesitations.

Are you now writing music for your next release yet? When can we expect to see a full-length from Odes of Ecstasy, and what is upcoming for the band?

For the time being, we are just rehearsing the songs off the CD and some cover songs from various bands in order to be ready for some live shows here in Greece in September. We are also trying to collect some money in order to "transform" a basement I have into a studio just for rehearsals. Our next CD release will probably be ready in 1999's autumn.

I guess that about does it for our interview. I must say I greatly enjoyed your music and look forward to your future works, but as for now, please give us a closing to your interview with whatever else you may have to say. Thank you for your time and take care!

Thanks for your kind words and for your support.

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(Rotten Sound interview contd. from page 50)
We have played about 30-40 gigs, and we fucking rule when we're live (hehe!). Perhaps I'm the wrong person to tell about our live show, because I've NEVER seen us live. There're always some punksters, HC'ers, grinders and metal heads in front of the stage when we play. Sometimes it has got really wild.

There are no other best shows that one (of the ones that I have seen): SLAYER in Nummirock '98!!!

I know you just released Under Pressure, but when can we expect a new release from Rotten Sound? Have you written much material for it yet? How does the band go about writing songs? Is it a group effort or does each member bring in ideas for everyone else to try out?

We are planning to go to the studio at the start of next year (1999) to record a new full length. We have about 20-30 minutes of material right now (vocals are missing from the newest songs). Usually someone comes (Mika usually) to rehearsals with a new song, and we put it together with the whole band.

Thanks for taking the time to fill out my questions. Anything you'd like to add to wrap this interview up?

I certainly hope that my answers are as good as your questions were. Thanks a lot for the interview, and no thanks to my laziness in answering.

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The End Records

Here's yet another promising up and coming label in the underground. Andreas and company are doing things right in every way that I've seen as a new label. They are releasing quality material, doing a good amount of promotion, and finally even getting major promotion company to handle the radio promo for them. Finding and signing some highly original bands doesn't hurt either. Andreas took the time out to quickly respond to this email interview that I sent him. Here's what he had to say... (Bart)

The End Records hasn't had an office here in the states that long, but I feel you've already made a mark on the underground. How long has The End Records been in existence, and how can you explain your successful start as a label here in the states?

The whole idea started in the summer of 1997, when Sergey Makhotkin, which I've known for a few years now, approached me with the idea of starting a label. He already had a few bands in mind, but he said he couldn't do it by himself. So we started the label together, and early 1998 we released our first album.

Both of us are very committed and dedicated, and I believe that contributes to what we have achieved so far. That, and of course, the quality of our releases.

The Mental Home CD release was the first for The End Records here in the states. How has that CD been received in the underground? What do you think they have to offer to the underground that other bands do not? When will their new album be released?

Yes, Mental Home's Vale is our very first release. It was originally released on tape format in 1996 in Russia, but we have since obtained the rights for it and decided to release it worldwide on CD. The album is doing great both here and abroad. Vale is a harsh album but manages to be very emotional at the same time. It is based on many layers, and it is definitely not the easiest album to get into and that's the beauty of it. It unveils more secrets upon every listen. Their new album, Black Art, will be released in August as digipak.

The Sculptured CD was originally released by Mad Lion Records, but you have since gotten a license agreement to distribute it here in the states and elsewhere. Why the Sculptured CD, and how did the deal come about? Will you be doing the same for any other Mad Lion releases or was this a one time deal?

I first listened to their demo in April of 1997, and it just blew me away! It was definitely one of the best demos I have heard in the last few years. Thus when we decided to begin the label, I contacted them immediately for a possible cooperation. They informed me that they had already signed a contract with Mad Lion so the next step for us was to contact Mad Lion and get the rights from them. I do not know if we will try to license any other bands from Mad Lion. From what I know, they only have one more CD release besides the Sculptured one.

The Nokturnal Mortum CD has been very well received (so much in fact that Nuclear Blast has picked it up). How did you come across this band, and what was that one special thing about Nokturnal Mortum that made you want to sign them? You told me they have already written a ton of new material. Talk about that some...

Yes, Nokturnal Mortum's Goat Horns is doing great! As you mentioned, Nuclear Blast licensed them for Europe. It was actually Sergey who discovered the band after buying their tapes in Moscow. Not only I think they are one of the best new black metal bands to emerge, but also one of the most unique, as they do have they own style and their music sounds very refreshing.

As far as their releases, we are planning to release their new album To The Gates Of The Blasphemous Fire in December. The new album is a lot more intense than Goat Horns with the guitars playing the leading role this time around, and the two keyboard players creating amazing atmospheres in the background! They are already working on another album plus they have recorded two more EP's, and honestly I do not know when we will be able to release all these!

Your most recent release has been the Odes of Ecstasy release. It's a wonderful mix of extreme styles, and with the addition of the female vocals makes it that much more original. How did you locate this band, and why do you think they hadn't been picked up by anyone else yet?

Thank you for the kind words. The band is from Greece, and I've known them for a couple of years now. They sent me their first official promo, and I've been following them since then. I just cannot believe how much they progress with every release! We actually had some offers to license the band in Europe, but we haven't agreed on anything yet.

Two upcoming releases you have are the new Scholomance and the new Epoch of Unlight. Two releases I'm looking forward to because both bands have been interviewed in previous issues of Intellektual Spew. What can you tell us about those releases so far?

Yes, both bands are recording at the moment and both will be released in October. Together with Sculptured they are our US bands. Just like the rest of what we offer each has a very unique sound. For example, Epoch Of Unlight delivers its hellish mastery of death and melodic black metal, while Scholomance sets forth orchestrations of progressive and esoteric visions with anguished vocals.

What do you think has been the single most important thing for The End Records to do here early on to ensure your success as a label? What pitfalls do you think you've avoided as well?

I do not know about reasons for success or pitfalls, as neither myself and Sergey have been involved in the music business before The End. We started the whole project without knowing what to expect. We just knew we had some great bands in our hands, and we had to promote them.

I guess from the beginning both ourselves, and the bands were very committed and decided that we should take it very seriously otherwise it is not even worth trying. It was not easy as there was a lot to be learned, and we do make mistakes but we kept on moving forward, and I think all the hard work is starting to pay off. Of course, it is still quite early to start talking about success, but we do enjoy what we do and we will keep on trying our best.

I would like to acknowledge that we've had great help from many magazines, radios, other labels and even fans and that proves how close everybody is in the metal scene. In fact, I cannot recall having one negative experience yet!

What is it about a band that makes you want to sign them? I know you that you said you prefer bands with some melody in the music, but what besides that is important to you?

One thing: I just want to listen to their music all the time. For example, when I first got hold of the new Mental Home Black Art, I just couldn't stop listening to it. I have had it for about 10 months now, and I still listen to it every week. The same goes with the rest of our bands. Personally, I do prefer bands with melodic elements, but the style is not too important for me. Our bands range from atmospheric to doom, black, death, avant-garde, etc. Furthermore, we like bands that set their own trademark and have new elements to offer to the scene.

If there was one band here in the underground that you wish you could have signed, who would it be and why? Is there a band that you have passed on signing that you have now regretted doing so?

I think we are pretty new to be at that stage yet. Of course we receive many demos that we do not sign, and I am sure one of them will make it big one day. There was a band I

(interview continued on page 61)

Metal = Neanderthal?

By Bill Dunmyer

This essay was originally written in late 1996. I wrote it with a particular metal zine in mind, but that zine chose not to print it. As soon as Bart at Intellektual Spew (Hail Bart!) learned of the essay's existence, he just about insisted I show it to him. After reading it he felt that printing it still made sense, and I agreed. The essay feels like it could have been written yesterday. So here we present "Metal = Neanderthal?" with only slight modifications. I dedicate it to all the hetero metal lords out there like Bart who stand up for their homo brothers. (In particular, my friends Paul, Jeff, Jay, Bob, and Ross: You Rule!! You give me faith in metal and faith in the future.)

A radically unpleasant thing recently happened to me in the American metal scene, and I decided to let the larger metal horde know about it, partly just to let others know what a current band is like, so they can make a more informed choice about the bands they do and don't want to support. But I believe it also goes to the heart of some big questions about the metal scene in this country and what future it's going to have. I for one think the scene in this country is in deep crisis. I guess just about everyone agrees. The question is why.

I think it's experiences like the one I had that are in part responsible for the American scene's radical dwindling. Collectively examining experiences like these and thinking the issues through is part of the path toward revival, it seems to me.

The story begins this way:

Throughout 1996 I had begun to read more about unsigned metal bands and was getting energized to start contacting them. I began reading demo reviews more closely and was eager to start digging around in those catacombs, especially the catacombs of unsigned American death metal.

There were a few zines that were helping me with this. And some metal pen pals helped, too. (Metal pen pals fucking reign!!) The particular bands I was zooming in on were Jungle Rot, Cianide, Deathrune, and Corpse Vomit. Corpse Vomit was the first one I wrote to, and I did it in the excited state of just having been to New York City's mega Deathstock show.

Deathstock was a huge lift. I had only recently moved to NYC from Middle of Nowhere, USA. Because I had been living in the middle of nowhere, I was almost never able to see a metal show, or rock shows period. (But I now see that there are not many more metal shows in NYC! A frightening statement, telling me that I'm really right about the U.S. scene being in deep crisis.)

I'd read about the Deathstock shows in METAL MANIACS, and I'd dreamt about going to one. And here I was actually going! I was out of my skin with excitement, as I'm sure all the small-town metalheads can understand. I had a supremely great time at the show. The standout bands for me were Immolation, Angelcorpse, and Brutal Truth.

In the wake of that death metal extravaganza, I wrote to my first DM underground band: Corpse Vomit. I sent this guy, Pat, a letter with a SASE, asking him for info on his band's tapes, telling him some about me, and telling him how much I had enjoyed Deathstock and that I was still high from it.

I told him that I was kind of scared when I first went into the club, but that I quickly realized how easy-going and cool the crowd was. No moronic testosterone contests or anyone trying to ram anyone else into the ground. It was one of the coolest, friendliest, and most intelligent rock crowds I've ever been in actually. A real positive crowd. But not wimpy.

Positivity in the strong sense. The positivity that comes from genuine self-confidence – not needing to dominate someone to know you're strong and worthy of respect. Bottom line: no grunting Neanderthals were there.

And it was a big crowd. I told Mr. Vomit that Angelcorpse had impressed me in particular, and that I'd found their lead singer to be an astonishingly good front-man, and really sexy too. It was great to watch him, and great to see him energizing the crowd with his excellent, crushing set. He blew fire at the end. Literally. He was over and above. A real artist. But also low to the ground, in that true, un-showy, un-glamorous way. A genuine metal artist.

Then I told Mr. Vomit that I liked what I'd read about his band, and that I wanted to support him by buying his tapes. I asked him to use the SASE to get back to me with ordering info.

He did write back. But he sent no ordering info and didn't even put a return address on the envelope. He never wanted to hear from me again. This is what he wrote, word-for-word, English errors left intact:

This is Pat. I am very much in question as to why you wrote me. Did you write me to let me know you thought the lead singer (male) of Angelcorpse was very hot? Who gives a fuck. Metal is for pure rage and destruction. Not a fucking glam fag centerfold.

I'm glad to know that every-one was so easy-going and friendly at the show. Was it like riding on your first roller coaster? Or were you just worried they would find out your a limp fuck wearing ladies undies.

There is no place for the weak.

Let's examine this Deliverance hillbilly's mentality. First is his obvious homophobia. (A similar term I use is hetero-supremacism. I use the two, "homophobia" and "hetero supremacism," interchangeably.) Of course this is such a huge issue that I'd be writing for 10 years if I were going to discuss it thoroughly. But let's get some examination of it started.

I told him that Angelcorpse had impressed me in particular, and that I'd found their lead singer to be an astonishingly good frontman, and really sexy too.

I consider homophobia to be one of the U.S. scene's greatest weaknesses. I can't think of many more pathetic things than a straight guy going into a panic about male homosexuality. Especially a guy that's supposedly a rocker and a metalhead. Let me give the homophobes a basic lesson in human sexuality, a lesson they somehow missed in college (oops, that's right, they skipped college entirely, how could I forget). Ready, here we go:

Some human males come out liking females, some come out liking other males, and others come out liking both males and females. We have no idea why. That's just how our species is. Not all humans are the same sexually. WE'RE A SEXUALLY DIVERSE SPECIES.

Read that paragraph again, to make sure you understand it. It contains one of the simplest, most basic facts about human sexuality. But for some strange reason, many heterosexuals have difficulty absorbing it, even many heterosexuals in the metal scene. You'd think that a metalhead would be wiser about this kind of thing, given that rock is at heart a rebellion against conservative, repressed sexual mores. But there you are.

(Of course the above is also true for human females: some of them come out liking boys, some liking girls, some liking both boys and girls. Again, just natural sexual diversity.)

Hetero-supremacism is, I think, a product of subconscious hatred for what the human species really is. It's also a good old fashioned attempt by one human group, the heterosexuals, to turn themselves into an upper caste. That kind of attempt of course has a long heritage in our species' history. Male-supremacism, white-supremacism, and Christian-supremacism are obviously the same kind of thing. Obvious to anyone with a brain.

If a guy is straight, then he's straight. Why would he fucking care if another guy is not straight?! Why would that make him panicky? Is he afraid that the homo and bi guys are gonna rape him? Or seduce and "convert" him? If he did think such things, he'd be having FANTASIES. And he'd need to explore his subconscious to find out why he was having such sexual fantasies about other males. Maybe he was sexually abused by a man when he was a boy? Maybe he occasionally has some erotic desire for another male and freaks out on some subconscious level because of that? (All males occasionally experience erotic appreciation for other males. It doesn't necessarily mean they're gay, or even bi.)

I've often heard a straight guy say, "Homo stuff just makes me fucking sick to my stomach." And they say it as if homo guys are the sickest and most vile creatures on Earth. To all those guys: Who gives a flying fuck??!!! Any sex will nauseate someone when the sex is not within his sexual orientation! BIG FUCKING DEAL! Hetero sex nauseates homos, but you don't see them going on and on about it, or trying to degrade heteros because of it. In a sexually diverse species, what turns one person on is likely to nauseate someone else! Wake the fuck up! Heterosexuality is your nature -- but it's not everyone's nature!

All my straight male friends (almost all my friends are straight guys in the metal scene, but I'm almost exclusively homo) say that they've always felt that homophobic guys are subconsciously insecure about their sexuality, subconsciously frightened that they might be homo or bi. This causes them such anxiety on the subconscious level, that they turn homo males into objects of intense hatred and loathing, sometimes in a bizarrely violent way. And they seem particularly to enjoy public assaults on homo males. Like they need other hetero males to see that they're hetero, in case any of their fellow straight males were having doubts about them presumably.

Pathetic, isn't it. What puny weaklings and cowards. The homophobe, particularly the violent homophobe, is to me the clearest embodiment of puniness and cowardice. His insecurities and fears are as big and deep as the ocean. I think that at bottom homophobes are suffering from a fear of life and a fear of certain sides of their own nature.

Here's a basic lesson in human sexuality for the homophobes

And of course let us not forget that hetero-supremacism is ultra Judeo-Christian. All these metal guys running around spouting off about how Satanic they are, when they're really Puritans! What pathetic worms and hypocrites. Nobody reeks of hypocrisy like a Satanic homophobe. At heart they're fellow travelers of the Christian Coalition.

The other big set of issues in my Corpse Vomit experience has to do with Mr. Vomit's being disgusted that I said the Deathstock crowd was so friendly. That to him sounded weak, "faggy," and un-metal, particularly un-death metal. For Mr. Vomit, a DM show apparently should have the guys all scared of one another. This is the Neanderthal machismo that reigns in American prisons and in many lower-class neighborhoods in the country. Is that what we want American metal to be about? Are we motivated by random hostility toward everyone and everything? And do we think it's weak or "faggy" to like someone? Do we thrive off making other guys fear us?

I agree with Mr. Vomit that a central part of metal, and particularly DM, is rage. He's way off though if he thinks he has something to teach me about rage and brutality. I have loads of rage, and I'm ready to do battle. But my rage surrounds the fact that there are so many retarded yahoos like him! It fucking enrages me that he exists! And that he thinks he's superior to me! That's the icing on that sickening cake. And it triples my rage that I keep finding these sorts of sexually hysterical buffoons in this country's metal scene!

Mr. Vomit's rage and brutality is random. Or it's directed toward any guy he feels he can physically dominate, or any guy who ever expresses gentleness. I guess it's some sixth-grader version of Darwinism, with him coming out as nature's winner if he can "beat up" everyone else. Survival of the fittest, don't you know. Any emotion that's not about conquest and domination is an expression of the incapacity to survive, these lower-class American machoids seem to think.

Is this elementary-school Darwinism the kind of mentality we want as the American metal philosophy? I and all my metal friends definitely don't think so. And none of us is weak. We want an intense scene that's ready for battle, but where the battles have some sense to them. I don't battle just to battle. That's what a buffoon does. Battling to me is not an inherent good. It's good only when it's a battle for something meaningful. And I don't consider sadism toward people who have a different sexuality than me to be a meaningful cause.

I also think we should distinguish brutal music from brutality in life. I thrive on brutal music. But it doesn't mean I'm ready to brutalize someone when the CD is over. Sometimes it's just the opposite: brutal music sometimes is elevating and very calming for me. It makes me forget about loathsome ignoramuses like Mr. Vomit. It smashes me into another plane, where the spirits and bodies around me are wiser and more evolved than what I generally find around me.

I definitely don't think it is weak or "faggy" to have people in your life that you like! Gentleness and tenderness are not signs of weakness! Just the opposite!! If Mr. Vomit has never liked anyone and has never felt the STRENGTHENING power of love, then I feel incredibly sorry for him. He would be missing out on life to such an extent that it's excruciating even to imagine. I think actually that that kind of empty social life is precisely what produces bigotry and machismo. Scratch the surface of any macho bigot, and what you get is crushing loneliness. A little boy who was never loved, and who has a lot of buried anger about that.

That is most definitely not what I see as the metal way. All the true heavy rockers know better. Mr. Vomit is the kind of guy that Black Sabbath, in their immortal words, called a "war pig." "Iron Man" is another great Sabbath song that expresses loathing and perhaps pity for this type of guy. How colossally pathetic if that type of guy got vaunted as the American metal hero!

To sum this article up, I think the homophobic, crushingly unwise Neanderthals (who yearn to go back in evolutionary time) keep chasing most of the smart people out of American metal. I don't want to stand by and just let them kill our scene or make it the gathering place of only morons. And if they've already succeeded, I think we can turn it all around and build a new scene.

If anyone wants to discuss this some more, don't hesitate to contact me. Intelligent American metalheads MUST get together more and must provide a very clear alternative to the Neanderthals. And non-homophobic metal men have got to get more visible and more vocal. I've found many, many non-homophobic straight guys in the scene, but they're often timid about verbalizing their convictions around other straight guys. There's courage in numbers. We've got to get together more.

Bart at Intellektual Spew has clearly taken a big step in that direction just in publishing this. There are almost no other straight-male zine editors in the country who would have printed this article. Bart's courage says to me that he's one of the few true metalheads. But I know he's not alone. Start speaking up more, guys! We can rebuild this scene! It's gonna be up to us.

Feel free to contact me at the following address:
Bill Dunmyer
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(The End Records int. contd. from page 59)

really wanted to sign, and I was looking for their contact info but then one day I opened a metal magazine, and it said that they signed with Earache. I was happy actually because I know Earache will do a great promotion for them. That band is Elysian Fields!

What other things does The End Records have in store for the future? Have you signed any more bands lately? Do you sometimes fear that you may have signed too many bands early on?

Mental Home, Sculptured and as mentioned above Nokturnal Mortum, are all going to the studio to record new albums. All will see the light sometime in 1999. We are looking into a couple of new bands but nothing is final yet. If we sign a new band, we will make an announcement. As far as other plans, we are looking into setting up a small tour sometime in 1999. We would also like to have some of our bands play at the Milwaukee Metal Fest next year.

To answer the last section of your question, at the moment we have six bands. We didn't sign them because we wanted to show a big list under own name, but rather because we like their music so much and we feel that they need to get the awareness they deserve. I think it was better we signed the bands early on as that gave us an opportunity to release a compilation featuring songs from each band and also be able to set up a plan on what we wanted to do for the whole year. It helped us move to the next level very early and that was a good plus for us.

Your label has become one of the new upstarts in the metal community, and I applaud you for your success so far. Anything you'd like to say to wrap this interview up?

Thank you for the opportunity to speak about my favorite topic – Metal! If you have any questions do not hesitate to get in touch. In addition, you can ask for our free catalog or visit our web site which is loaded with all kinds of info from latest news, to album covers, descriptions, photos, bios, reviews, sound samplers, etc.

If you like metal music, you will enjoy what is available at The End!

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Franz Joseph Haydn

(Every issue I will feature a sort of informal biography for a particular classical composer. I have always found that the classical music is even more interesting when you learn something about the lives of the men behind the music. This biography is no way considered to 100% accurate. This is how I have perceived his life after doing a fair amount of research.)

Franz Joseph Haydn was born in 1732 on April Fool's Day in a small Austrian town by the name of Rohrau. The town was located near Vienna. Vienna was the cultural hub for the arts in Europe during this time. It seems as if he was born in the right place at the right time to make a major impact on the way classical music was written and played.

Haydn gained admittance into a boarding school at the age of eight in 1740. He was accepted because of his strong love of music, and also because he had an excellent voice for singing in the choir. The school was strict and kept Haydn busy although he wasn't always learning about thing that interested him. He was more interested in the composition of instrumental music. He wasn't receiving any instruction at the school, so at this young age he started teaching himself the basics of composition. As time grew on, Haydn grew older and near the age of puberty. He risked the loss of his higher pitched and beautiful singing voice. The choir teacher approached him with the idea of getting castrated to prevent the breaking of his voice so he could continue to sing in the choir. Haydn's only love was music so he agreed. The very morning Haydn was supposed to have the operation, his father came to the boarding school and learned of the planned surgery. He was very angry, and confronted the choir teacher about it. The teacher didn't want to cause an embarrassment to the church so the idea was dropped. It was in 1749 when Haydn did hit puberty, and his voice did break. He no longer had the beautiful singing voice that he once had. He also started getting along less and less with his teacher, and before long he was expelled from the boarding school with no money or even a place to sleep.

These next few years were very difficult for Haydn. He had no place to sleep and food wasn't always a dependable thing. He would perform on the streets with the other musicians and normally earn just enough money to buy some bread so he could live another day. He started to become more well known around the local musicians, and before long was tutoring some of them, and this helped him earn some money as well.

He suddenly (or so it seems to most biographers) gets married to a lady by the name of Maria Anna Keller. No one knows exactly why he married the woman. They did not get along; and she was known to have quite a temper. She often would do things just to upset him if possible. She even used his compositions one time as tablemats for when they were going to eat. Neither seemed to have a love for each other, but they did stay together (at least legally according to the church) until they both died of old age.

In 1761, things finally come around for Haydn when he gets a job as a court musician for Prince Esterhaza. Haydn was working under a man by the name of Werner, and it didn't take long for Werner to realize the true talents of Haydn. Werner was often considered jealous of Haydn's talents, and did not take well to Haydn's new ideas on composition. Fortunately though, the Prince liked Haydn and actually ended up paying Haydn almost twice as much even though Werner was actually his senior. Haydn did respect Werner, but Werner never seemed to be able to return the respect. Haydn eventually took over as the music director when Werner died in 1766. Haydn truly loved his position of orchestra leader. He was kept extremely busy by the Prince, who always had him writing a new piece of chamber music or coming up with a new opera. Haydn mainly trained the other singers, fixed the musical instruments and improved the music as a whole. Even though Haydn was under contract to not play for anyone else other than the Prince, he would sometimes play elsewhere when it was to help poor, starving musicians in the community. Haydn kept working for the Prince for almost thirty years before the Prince died, and the Prince's younger brother disbanded the orchestra leaving Haydn without a job.

During those thirty years though, Haydn grew to become very good friends with Mozart. The two were quite different, but their love of music is what kept them such close friends. Mozart was the irresponsible one who always acted childish, and Haydn was always the quiet reserved man who was a very good leader because he was practical. Mozart often said that he loved to study Haydn's instrumental pieces because he learned so much from the composition techniques that Haydn employed. Haydn was said to always be in awe of Mozart's operas. After seeing one of his operas, Haydn said he no longer felt the desire to write operas because he would never reach the perfection that Mozart had achieved. He was also to have said that Mozart was the best composer that ever lived. He said this before and after Mozart died, but he died in 1791, about the same time that Haydn was released from his duties.

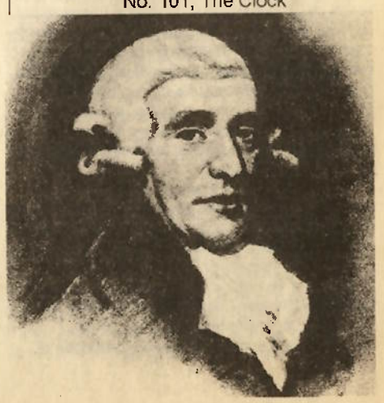
In 1791 Haydn moved to Vienna because the success of his symphonies was allowing him to move where he wanted on his own. He was quite busy and famous in Vienna but decided to visit in London for a while. When he got there, he was amazed at the vigor in which the English musicians played his music. They gave him a new found desire to compose. His chamber music is what is most notable even to this day. His string quartets are masterful pieces of instrumentals in the classic vein. There was a younger composer by the name of Pleyel in London at this time as well. Both Haydn and Pleyel had their dedicated followers claiming the other to be inferior. Haydn and Pleyel were good friends actually, and would even play each other's pieces when given the chance.

Eventually, Haydn had to head back to Vienna once again. He stopped by to meet the young Beethoven. He was extremely impressed with Beethoven, and offered to counsel him in composition if he came to live in Vienna. Beethoven eventually met up with Haydn in Vienna, but the two did not get along well. Their personalities were quite different, and they just did not work well together. Their age difference was a major obstacle. Haydn was sixty, and Beethoven was in his early twenties. Haydn did say that Beethoven would one day be considered one of the greatest composers ever. He also said that he would have been proud to call himself a teacher of Beethoven. Beethoven admitted years later to seeing things as Haydn did years ago finally. Beethoven always held a high amount of respect for Haydn.

When Haydn had gotten back to Vienna, he was disappointed that people were not overly happy to see him back. It wasn't before long that he was returning to England where he had made many friends. He spent time in England and Vienna before becoming too frail to move back and forth and spent his last days in Vienna. He died about the time of the Revolutionary War in 1809. At the time, due to the war, there wasn't much done in the way to properly bury and show respect to this great composer. His body was later moved to a tomb that properly gave him the respect he is due.

Haydn wrote almost one hundred symphonies alone during this lifetime. He lived well beyond the normal expectancy during this time in history, and that helps explain the large catalog of pieces he worked on. He started to write for a full orchestra that still is the make up of size of an orchestra still today. He was the first to also write in four movements, and he stated what each movement should be like tempo/mode wise. He is considered the father of the symphony and the leader of the classical musical period in history. His influence on classical music even today cannot be questioned.

Key works by Haydn that are recommended:
Any of his string quartets.
The following symphonies:
No. 94, The Surprise
No. 100, The Military
No. 101, The Clock



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Germany

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Simi Valley, CA 93065

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